

# THE RUSSIAN REVIEW



*An American Quarterly  
Devoted to Russia  
Past and Present*

*April  
1950*

*Vol. 9, No. 2*

*Price \$1.00*

## Contributors to This Issue

**WILLIAM H. CHAMBERLIN**, foreign correspondent in Soviet Russia for *The Christian Science Monitor* 1922-1933, is the author of well-known works on the Soviet Union, of which the latest is *The Russian Enigma*.

**O. ANISIMOV** is a Russian refugee scholar, at present residing in Western Germany.

**TREVOR LLOYD** is Professor of Geography and Chairman of the Department of Geography at Dartmouth College; he is one of the founders of the Arctic Institute of North America and its present Governor; in 1944-45 he was Canadian Consul to Greenland and in 1947-1948 was Chief of the Geographical Bureau of the Canadian government.

**DAVID HECHT** is Assistant Professor of History at Bowdoin College.

**NICHOLAS BERDYAEV**, Russian religious thinker and author of numerous philosophical works (1874-1949).

**LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY**, historian and specialist in Russian literature, is the author of *The Origins of American Intervention in North Russia*, 1937; *Intervention at Archangel*, 1944; *Alexander I of Russia*, 1947; *The Acmeist Poets of Russia*, 1949.

**STANLEY W. PAGE** is Instructor in Russian History at City College in New York.

# THE RUSSIAN REVIEW

*An American Quarterly Devoted to Russia  
Past and Present*

Vol. 9

APRIL 1950

No. 2

★ ★ ★

The Cold War: A Balance Sheet, <i>William Henry Chamberlin</i> . . .	79
The Soviet System of Education, <i>O. Anisimov</i> . . . . .	87
The Northern Sea Route, <i>Trevor Lloyd</i> . . . . .	98
Plekhanov and American Socialism, <i>David Hecht</i> . . . . .	112
N. F. Fedorov, <i>Nicholas Berdyaev</i> . . . . .	124
Three Sojourners in the Acmeist Camp, <i>Leonid I. Strakhovsky</i> .	131
The Rôle of the Proletariat in March 1917, <i>Stanley W. Page</i> . .	146

## BOOK REVIEWS

Stalin, A Political Biography, <i>by Isaac Deutscher, Bertram D. Wolfe</i> . . . . .	150
The Political Theory of Bolshevism, <i>by Hans Kelsen, Mark Vishniak</i> . . . . .	152
The Russian Revolution, <i>by M. N. Roy, Dimitri von Mohrenschildt</i> . . . . .	155

*Continued on Page II*

History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution, <i>by Peter Lyashchenko, Warren B. Walsh</i> . . . . .	157
The Soviet Economy: A Selected Bibliography of Materials in English, <i>by Harry Schwartz, Holland Hunter</i> . . . . .	160
Introduction to Russian History and Culture, <i>by Ivar Spectator, Valentine Tschebotarioff-Bill</i> . . . . .	161
Ivan the Terrible, <i>by Hans von Eckardt, Walther Kirchner</i> . . . . .	162

# THE RUSSIAN REVIEW

Dimitri von Mohrenschildt

*Editor*

Michael Karpovich

Warren B. Walsh

Alexis Wiren

---

The aim of "The Russian Review" is to present a non-partisan interpretation of Russian history, civilization, and culture. The Review invites contributions by authors of divergent views, but the opinions expressed in any individual article in this journal are not necessarily those of the editors.

---

Books for review and correspondence concerning reviews should be sent to Professor Warren B. Walsh, 113 Maxwell, Syracuse University, Syracuse 10, New York.

---

Copyright 1950, and published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by "The Russian Review," 215 West 23rd Street, New York 11, N. Y. Subscription rates: \$4.00 a year in the United States; Canada \$4.50; foreign \$5.00, single copy \$1.00. The contents of this publication cannot be reprinted without the permission of the editors. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.



# The Cold War: A Balance Sheet

BY WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

"THERE are at the present time two great nations in the world, which started from different points, but seem to tend towards the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans. . . .

"All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and they have only to maintain their power; but these are still in the act of growth. . . .

"The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is liberty; of the latter, servitude. Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe. . . ." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

This reflection is far truer today than it was when de Tocqueville composed it. One of the most unmistakable results of the Second World War is the eclipse of Europe. Never in modern history has that historic continent counted for so little politically and militarily. Even Great Britain, which escaped hostile occupation and came out of the war on the winning side, as one of the "Big Three," has been gravely weakened and impoverished.

There is no physical frontier between the United States and the Soviet Union, although the American and Soviet flags are within a few miles of each other on two islands in Bering Strait, between Eastern Siberia and Alaska. But there is a long and ever stiffer political frontier between these two great powers of the postwar world. It runs rather sharply through Europe, with Sweden and Switzerland as neutrals, politically and culturally oriented toward America, and Tito's Yugoslavia as a kind of no man's land, Communist and dictatorial in its internal régime, but at odds with Moscow.

The frontier becomes more blurred in some parts of Asia, because of the chaotic confusion which prevails in some countries like Burma and the desire of others to avoid taking sides in the "cold war." However, Japan and the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand

may be considered in the western camp, and Turkey and Iran have resisted Soviet attempts at encroachment and penetration.

China today, apart from the islands of Hainan and Formosa, is in the hands of a Communist government which professes close attachment to Moscow. A good deal of the former French colony of Indo-China is under the control of a régime headed by Ho Chi Minh, Moscow-trained Communist. There are Communist guerrilla forces of varying strength in Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia.

How did this cold war, which has created a line of cleavage running all through the Eurasian continent, start? Historians will debate this question as they may argue about the responsibility for the Peloponnesian War, or the Thirty Years War, or the long series of conflicts that followed the French Revolution.

I think the beginning of the cold war can be traced pretty definitely to the disillusionment of the western powers with the aftermath of the Yalta Conference, the second and last meeting of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill. There is a rather striking historical parallel here with the Munich conference of September, 1938.

Neville Chamberlain believed that by satisfying Hitler's demands for the transfer to Germany of the German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia he had insured "peace in our time." But a year had not elapsed after Munich when Britain and France declared war on Germany, following Hitler's attack on Poland.

The mood among America's representatives after Yalta was extremely optimistic, if we may judge from the following passage in the writings of Roosevelt's chief adviser, Harry Hopkins:<sup>1</sup>

"We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace—and by 'we' I mean all of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or of any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far in the future as any of us could imagine."

Yet within two months after the end of the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt was sending some sharply worded communications to Stalin. The similarity in the circumstances of Munich and Yalta was almost ironically striking. For Czechoslovakia substitute

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 870.

Poland, for Hitler read Stalin. Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta played the roles of Chamberlain and Daladier at Munich.

In each case there was the hope that by sanctioning the sacrifice of some of the territory of a weak ally it would be possible to placate a dictator and insure lasting peace. In each case the hope proved to be an illusion. For Hitler's ambitions were not satiated by the acquisition of the Sudetenland. And Stalin was not prepared to stop with the acquisition of Eastern Poland.

Roosevelt and Churchill professed to hope that, under the terms of the Yalta agreement, Poland, within altered frontiers, would possess a free and independent government. But the commission, composed of Foreign Minister Molotov and the American and British Ambassadors in Moscow, which was charged with the task of consulting with representative Polish leaders about the organization of a new government, was deadlocked from the beginning.

The Soviet government displayed more and more clearly its intention to impose on Poland a Communist-dominated government, with a minimum number of western-oriented Poles in unimportant positions for window-dressing. Toward the end of March, Churchill warned Roosevelt that the agreement on Poland was clearly breaking down. The President, on March 27, informed Churchill that he, too, had "been watching with anxiety and concern the development of the Soviet attitude since Yalta."

Roosevelt sent Stalin a message on April 1st which spoke of lack of progress in implementing the decisions about Poland, warned of "difficulties and dangers to Allied unity" and stated that "any solution which would result in a thinly disguised continuation of the present government would be entirely unacceptable and would cause our people to regard the Yalta agreement as a failure."

Stalin's reply was negative in character, and Roosevelt died while a new communication was being drafted. Another cause of dissension between the Soviet Union and the Western powers was the action of the Soviet envoy Vishinsky in going to Bucharest and forcing through a change of government in Rumania without resorting to the procedure of consultation which had been agreed on at Yalta.

Disagreement about the character of the new régimes in Eastern and Southeastern Europe was certainly one of the causes of chronic strain in postwar relations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers. The United States viewpoint, as expressed in a number of communications, was that the Soviet government, under

the guise of insuring "friendly" governments in this part of the world, encouraged and actively abetted local Communist groups in seizing dictatorial power and maintaining this power by ruthless police-state methods. The situation was aggravated because the governments of these self-styled people's democracies adopted a consistently hostile tone toward the United States and the West, subjected United States diplomatic missions to close police surveillance and demanded the withdrawal of a number of American diplomats on charges of espionage.

Other differences of opinion developed all the way from Germany to Korea. Under the Potsdam Agreement, concluded in August, 1945, occupied Germany was supposed to be treated as an economic unit and democratic parties were to be encouraged. The Soviet military authorities, however, treated the Soviet zone as a closed preserve, from which they extracted large contributions in food-stuffs and manufactured goods.

Totalitarian methods in politics and state-controlled economics prevailed in the Soviet zone, while the Western zones followed the principles of free elections and private enterprise. The political split in Germany became final when a West German government, subject to overriding powers of the occupation states, was inaugurated at Bonn and an East German government was sponsored by the Soviet Union in its zone.

It would be difficult to say on what date the strain and tension between the United States and the Soviet Union reached sufficient intensity to deserve the name of cold war. One can recognize several milestones on the road to this development.

Late in February, 1946, Secretary of State Byrnes, in a speech at the overseas Press Club, delivered the gravest public warning to the Soviet Union pronounced up to that time by an American official. With obvious reference to the Soviet refusal to evacuate its troops from Iran within the six months' period prescribed by treaty, Byrnes said:

"It is not enough for nations to declare that they do not want war. Hitler said that. . . . The Charter (of the United Nations) forbids aggression and we cannot allow aggression to be accomplished by coercion or pressure or by subterfuges such as political infiltration. . . . We will not and we cannot stand aloof if force or the threat of force is used contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter. . . . We do not want to stumble and stagger into

situations where no power intends war but no power will be able to avert war."

Soon afterwards Winston Churchill delivered a speech with international repercussions at Fulton, Missouri. Churchill painted a sombre picture of the growing cleavage between the Soviet Union and the West, used the expression "iron curtain" to describe the isolation imposed on the Soviet controlled part of Europe and called for a closer association of American and British power.

President Truman in March, 1947, asked Congress for a special appropriation for military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey. Greece was torn by a Communist-led rebellion and the Soviet government had intimated territorial aspirations for some of Turkey's northeastern provinces and for a change of régime at the Dardanelles, an old objective of Russian expansion. Truman declared on this occasion: "Totalitarian régimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States."

This became known as the Truman Doctrine. Congress voted the desired appropriations. Another key feature of American post-war policy was the scheme of economic aid to Europe formally suggested by Secretary of State George C. Marshall in June, 1947, and generally known as the Marshall Plan. Marshall declared, in his speech of June 5, 1947:

"Our policy is not directed against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, desperation, and chaos."

However, the Soviet government refused to take part in this plan and forbade its East European satellites to do so. The Marshall Plan has, therefore, remained a venture in reconstruction for the non-Communist part of Europe.

United States foreign policy moved a long stride further away from traditional isolationism when the United States and eleven other nations (Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Portugal) signed the North Atlantic security treaty at Washington on April 4, 1949. Key to this agreement was article 5, which stipulates: "The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." At the same time the United States undertook to supply military aid to the European signatories of the agreement.



American policy in the cold war has tried to steer a middle course between appeasement and onesided concessions, on one side, and preventive war, on the other. An article published in the quarterly *Foreign Affairs* in 1947, under the pseudonym of X (the author was quickly and widely identified as George F. Kennan, State Department Russian expert and head of the Department's newly instituted Planning Division) furnishes useful guidance to the assumptions on which American policy was based. The conclusions in this article are summed up in the following sentences:

"The United States has in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or gradual mellowing of Soviet power. For no mystical, Messianic movement—and particularly not that of the Kremlin—can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs."

Here, in a nutshell, is the policy of containing Communism, to which the United States is committed. How has this policy worked in practice? What is the balance-sheet of the cold war?

Containment has been more effective in Europe than in Asia. As yet there is no sign either of mellowing or of break-up in the Kremlin. But the iron curtain has not been advanced. Conditions in Western Europe have improved to a point where seizure of power by Communist revolt from within may be considered almost impossible. And since the signing of the North Atlantic Pact the Soviet Union could not launch a military attack on Western Europe without assuming the risk of war with America.

There has also been one defection on the Soviet side of the iron curtain. Marshal Tito, Communist dictator of Yugoslavia, has broken with Moscow and has been attacked by the Kremlin with all weapons short of war, from vituperation to economic sanctions. Tito has held out, partly because he has learned the Soviet technique of government by a combination of propaganda, police terror, and tight political organization so well that he has been able to frustrate all Soviet attempts to stir up revolt within Yugoslavia.

A long list of political arrests and sentences of death and imprisonment and a large number of political refugees point to conditions of strain and tension in the Soviet satellite states. These countries, however, are held down by well organized police systems, reinforced,

in the case of Poland, Hungary, and Rumania, by Soviet troops. "Titoism" remains an isolated case of successful break with Moscow.

The weaknesses of Western Europe have by no means been entirely remedied. Progress toward political and economic unity has been painfully slow. With few exceptions the European countries face serious deficits in their balance of payments with the United States. This may lead to serious consequences as Marshall Plan aid is first reduced and finally eliminated altogether, according to present plans, in 1952.

In the cold war the Soviet Union possesses the advantage of being an empire, with a single controlling will. The relations between the United States and Western Europe are those of a coalition, with all the slowness of movement and conflicts of individual interest which coalitions always display.

If a political leader in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, or Bulgaria offends the Kremlin he disappears and is seen no more,—except perhaps in the dock at a staged treason trial. The United States cannot deal in this way with Britons and Frenchmen, West Germans, and Italians. The result is that the cracks and fissures are more visible on the Western side of the iron curtain than on the Eastern.

Still, by and large, the policy of containment in Western Europe has been reasonably successful. This cannot be said as regards Asia, where China has been swung into the Communist camp and the situation in several other oriental countries is shaky, to say the least.

Of course there is a radical difference between European and Asiatic conditions. There is far more community of political, religious, and cultural ideas between America and Europe than between America and Asia. Despite the shock of the late war the West European states are going concerns, capable of working toward political and economic goals.

Over a large part of Asia, however, old-fashioned colonialism has been swept away; but nothing very solid or permanent has taken its place. Countries are rent with civil war or have fallen under the rule of inexperienced new governments which may or may not be able to cope with the threats of economic chaos, political anarchy, and Moscow-directed Communism.

More than thirty years ago, the Soviet leader, Leon Trotsky, confronted with unacceptable terms by the Germans at Brest-Litovsk, proclaimed the slogan: No war and no peace. The Russian

troops would not fight, because they were too exhausted and war-weary. But the Soviet negotiators would not sign an annexationist peace.

Now this old and largely forgotten slogan, no war and no peace, is likely to describe the course of American-Soviet relations for a considerable length of time. Neither Washington nor Moscow is likely deliberately to precipitate an all-out shooting war. The risks are too great; the issue is too doubtful.

On the other hand, true peace is not easily attainable. The cold war is the product not of disputes about bits of territory or spheres of influence which could be adjusted or compromised. It is a clash of conceptions which are as difficult to mingle as oil and water, of closed doors against open doors, of dictatorship against free institutions, of centralized power against diffused power.

Even the stern warning of the hydrogen bomb offers no easy solution of American-Soviet differences. For any conceivable arms agreement, whether restricted to super-weapons or applied to all forms of armament, raises extremely difficult questions of goodwill and good faith.

Perhaps a brief balance-sheet of the cold war up to the present time would show as the principal American assets: a growing awareness of the threat of Soviet imperial Communism, definite gains in well-being and stability in western Europe, proof that the Soviet technique of expansion is not invincible, furnished by Tito's revolt in Yugoslavia. On the other side of the ledger must be set the Communist conquest of China, the failure of the Communist régimes in the Soviet Union and in the East European satellites either to crack up or to mellow, and the serious political, economic, and social problems in Western Europe which have been postponed, rather than solved by the Marshall Plan.

# The Soviet System of Education

BY O. ANISIMOV

**H**E does not know anything about Soviet Russia who is not familiar with the Communist system of education. In this article I shall not deal with the technicalities of this system or with the pedagogical methods it uses, but with the main educational principles underlying it, the over-all objectives it seeks to achieve, in a word, with the fundamental question underlying all educational systems: what kind of citizens is this educational system designed to turn out? What intellectual habits and moral and civic standards does it impart to the youths in its charge?

I can speak from experience and not merely as an observer as I had an unusual opportunity to obtain immediate and thorough knowledge of this educational system. After spending about twenty years, first as a student and later as a member of the teaching staff in several schools all over Europe, I settled down in 1937, in Riga, and found myself trapped there in the summer of 1940 by the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. I was teaching at that time in a secondary school and was also lecturing at an institute of literature. The Soviet authorities left me on the teaching staff because until then I was never mixed up in politics, and the local Communists who reported on everybody to the Moscow authorities, considered me politically harmless, which, in fact, I was. The new local Communist authorities established by Moscow were working under the direction of officials freshly imported from the Soviet Union, who decided on everything.

Several pedagogical instructors were sent from Moscow to initiate us into the new educational methods and, incidentally, to check up on our political reliability. Our first task was to study the new Soviet text books before starting our courses next autumn. These Soviet instructors and teachers, some of whom, to my consternation, spoke badly even their native tongue, Russian, were, by our standards, very poorly equipped for teaching even in secondary schools, let alone in an institution of higher learning. They were neither well informed in a general sense, nor widely read, nor simply competent in their own field. The first impression, which was to last to the end, was one of hopeless clumsiness—both physical and intellectual. With a few exceptions they were not unpleasant people,

yet their approach to education bewildered us. Brushing aside as utterly irrelevant all educational, or pedagogical problems, as we understood them, they pointed out to us that "real" education was *political* education, and no amount of pedagogic competence could make up for "political illiteracy"—a term which we were to hear constantly ever since. All this was being told in a friendly way which was utterly bewildering. They spoke to us about ourselves with compassion, as one would speak to people whose physical growth had been stunted by the lack of Vitamins B or C. It was not our fault, they told us, that we had been prevented from becoming familiar with the discoveries of "Scientific Socialism," but it was our first and most urgent duty to set about learning it.

All the text books which had been in use before the occupation were banned. The Soviet instructors with a staff of local Communists got down to the task of revising them, or compiling new ones. It was made clear to us that we should not remain on the teaching staff, unless we took a course in "political education" which was given to the pedagogical personnel by a charming Red Army major. This kind-hearted, relatively young man treated us in exactly the same way as did our Soviet colleagues: like so many nice but hopeless individuals, of whom a few might possibly become useful, if they succeeded in crossing the narrow bridge dividing the lands of capitalist doctrines from the country of "Scientific Socialism."

Our political instruction consisted in memorizing chapters from the famous *Short Course of the History of the Russian Communist Party*, the Communist Bible, which the Major described as "the most scientific book in the world" giving as the reason for this contention that "every word in it had been approved by comrade Stalin personally." We were encouraged to do additional reading at home, to give talks on some section of a chapter of the *Short Course*, to elaborate some point raised in the book by quotations from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, the founders of what is termed in Soviet Russia "Scientific Socialism."

It was made clear to us from the very beginning of the course that personal opinions were not wanted. Any form of personal criticism—even of the hated capitalism—was brushed aside without any discussion, for the simple reason that all that is to be said about capitalism has already been said by Marx-Engels, Lenin-Stalin. Since one couldn't improve upon these, to offer personal arguments was considered heresy. One has to go through this mental and moral



ordeal—this thrashing of the dry straw of other people's codified opinions enthroned as truth pure and absolute—to feel how indescribably wearying and depressing was this intellectual vacuum, this “stop” light to every personal thought, every new idea. We were like birds flitting about in a cage. We could hop from perch to perch, alight on the “errors” of the French philosophers, show what an intellectual thrashing Lenin or Stalin had administered them, or swoop down upon some other “capitalist” or “liberal” heresy, but *only by reference* to the works and ideas of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin. We were never allowed to discuss the essence of any of the doctrines in question.

We used to meet in the big university hall where the course was given. Among us were gray-haired scientists, some of them men of great erudition and reputation, who attended the course together with younger teachers and lecturers. Our instructor would come in, point his finger at someone and would ask some question from the *Short Course*. The victim would recount parrot-like, swallowing his own opinions, how Marx and Engels have “proved” that capitalism was doomed and the final victory of Communism was “inevitable.” Dismissals and arrests for political unreliability were already going on, slowly but steadily, and the knowledge of this was ever-present in our minds. After two months of my political education, and having plowed through scores of Soviet school-books, the full significance and impact of the Communist system of education grew upon me like a terrible nightmare. It became clear to me that we were expected to preach—for preaching it was—a new religion based on hatred (class warfare), presenting this religion as a science and using strictly scientific methods in spreading it. This combination of religious faith and scientific methods is the basis of Soviet education and ideology. It deserves a closer analysis, because of the terrible grip it exercises upon the minds of the youths.

The greatest accomplishment of man in the last five hundred years was the recognition, at the end of the Middle Ages, that reason was the supreme judge in all matters within its province. Before that, people tried to solve scientific problems only by reference to the established authorities—mainly Aristotle and the Bible. What was not to be found in these authorities was dismissed as irrelevant or turned down as false. The age of dogmatism ended with the enthronement of Human Reason and free criticism to which we owe the tremendous scientific progress of the last five hundred years.

Yet, in Soviet Russia, free thinking has been replaced by dogmatism, by exclusive reference to Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, whose codified opinions constitute the Communist faith.

This dogmatism pervades every book, treatise, or article published in Soviet Russia. I found the clearest exposé of this mind-killing dogmatism in the preface to a text book of history according to which I was supposed to teach. Human society, this book explains, is governed by economic laws. These laws, unknown to man for thousands of years until they were discovered in the nineteenth century by the greatest social scientist Karl Marx, explain all the social and economic developments of the past, as well as outline the course for all future developments.

The fundamental law is class warfare. Ranking in importance second only to the doctrine of class warfare is the theory (termed "law") that human society can make any positive social, economic, and cultural progress *only* by revolution, never by evolution. This is a logical supplement to class warfare and precludes the possibility of a compromise between the Communists and any other political party. To seek a compromise with the capitalist world is not only disloyal to the working class, but also "unscientific," and, therefore, not subject to any discussion. Marx's other opinions—among them his philosophic materialism—are also presented as "laws." Laws in the strictest sense of the term, as rigid, precise, and inescapable, as the laws of physics and chemistry. The "discoveries" of Marx and Engels were supplemented by Lenin and Stalin and together constitute what is called "Scientific Socialism"—a code of laws governing our society.

All historical, social, and economic facts are interpreted in all Soviet school-books *only* by reference to Scientific Socialism. This doctrine applies to the social struggles in Ancient Rome, to Napoleon's epoch, to Hitler's policy. When the author of a book deals, for instance, with Robert Owen and the cooperative movement, he does not discuss the essence of Owen's theories. He just states that the cooperative movement was doomed to failure, because it was out of line with the laws of Scientific Socialism; that it was built upon faith in human solidarity, not on the "scientific" assumption that the basis of our life is class warfare. Soviet authors carefully avoid putting forward any additional proofs or arguments, let alone personal opinions. There can be no additional proofs, no arguments—the "laws" explain all.

No Soviet teacher ever says that the Communist doctrine is better,

more humane, or superior to other social and economic doctrines. "Better," "superior" are comparatives, and no comparison is possible between truth and error. Communism, alias "Scientific Socialism," is based upon the truth of the greatest scientific discovery of all ages, while all the other doctrines are based upon errors artificially upheld by the hangers on of capitalism, who know that they are up against the "law," and that they are doomed, but, nevertheless, cling to their heresies because of the personal advantages they derive from them.

Such is the method adopted by Soviet educators, a method differing from all the accepted modern educational principles *in kind*, not in degree. It is extremely effective in creating that peculiarly Communist intellectual background which is slowly and skillfully woven into the consciousness of the future Soviet citizen. For us, trained in the West, the fallacy of the Soviet "scientific" method was obvious and terrifying. It was a return to the Middle Ages under the appearance of modern science. Hatred and warfare were preached under the guise of science. We were expected to instill into our pupils the belief that it was scientifically established that the *only* road to universal happiness led through hatred, war, bloodshed, and physical annihilation of millions who from self-interest barred the entrance to Paradise. We were to shape a generation of fanatics prepared to justify mass-murder for the sake of man's ultimate happiness. Nothing so diabolical has ever been devised by mankind.

The knowledge that all future developments are governed by laws of Scientific Socialism, by rigid economic determinism, might foster a passive, spectator's attitude. Why, indeed, bother, if everything is predetermined by laws from which there is no escape? Yet such is not the case. From the very first days of my activity as a Soviet teacher, the mood of exaltation and excitement that pervades every branch of activity in Russia began to grow upon me. One could not ward off the feeling that one was in for something really big, that one was taking part in a tremendous adventure upon the outcome of which hung the fate of mankind. Trifles ceased to be trifles, everything became purposeful imparting significance to every deed, every word, and gesture, as in times of war. We were being continually reminded of the "capitalist encirclement," of the dangers surrounding us, of the necessity never for a moment to relax in our efforts to defeat the enemies, to promote the cause of Communism, menaced by doomed but desperate op-

ponents. Scientific Socialism had established the fact that the world is heading towards the final triumph of Communism. Yet the process may take a couple of years, or may be retarded for centuries. Thanks to the genius of Lenin and Stalin, Russia was the first state to achieve Socialism, and for the time being is the only stronghold of Socialist democracy. We were living in a beleaguered fortress and had to beat back, day after day, the attacks of an insidious and powerful enemy who shifted his tactics from armed attack to economic strangulation.

To make all this clear to the children and the youths in our care was our first and most important duty. In cooperation with the Communist Youth organizations we were to create the emotional climate necessary for the activation of the theory of Scientific Socialism. We were told to impart to the children under our care a sense of mission, of urgency, and of personal responsibility. They were to think that hundreds of millions of starved and oppressed workers all over the world were looking to Soviet Russia for their liberation. Every teacher had to devote part of his lesson to the political education of his class, even if the subject he taught bore no relation whatsoever to politics. When a colleague of mine, an assistant professor of mathematics, asked our Soviet director of education how it was possible to insert political instruction in a course of mathematics, the latter answered without hesitation: "Well, before going on to the mathematical part of your course, you can point out to your class that scientific progress is greatly hampered in the capitalist countries, because under capitalism the worker cannot afford to send his children to school. Scientific research there is confined to the upper social classes. Describe the workers' miserable condition in Europe and America, remind your students that in England children were sent to work in the cotton mills at the early age of five or six. Show that this is a deliberate policy. The workers remain uneducated and physically stunted through hard work at such an early age, and have, therefore, no chance of ever improving their miserable lot. Contrast this with our own Socialist country where education is free and open to every child. A short political introduction must precede every lesson. This is the first duty of every politically conscious teacher." Noticing an expression of suppressed indignation on the face of the professor, he added drily: "All our Soviet teachers and professors believe in Communism; they are never at a loss to say something in its favor. Those who don't, would do well to look around for some other job."



It was my duty to take part in many school meetings and to attend the special courses of "political education" which formed part of the curriculum in all schools. Gradually, I came to realize fully the terrible impact of the Soviet system of indoctrination. Scores of millions of young and generous hearts are being systematically perverted and educated to hate with the object of preparing a generation of ardent defenders of the Socialist motherland. Insensibly, the feeling grows upon many young Soviet citizens that they are perpetually menaced in their own homes, that they must work harder, enjoy fewer comforts, content themselves with a poorer diet, because of the aggressive intents of the capitalist countries surrounding them. They are, as a result, beginning to develop a sort of "defensive aggressiveness," a determination to counter-attack the imaginary capitalist aggressor who threatens their most cherished possessions. The feeling grows upon the young student that he can only assert himself through a negative attitude towards the rest of the non-Communist world. To develop and strengthen this feeling is one of the main objectives of Soviet education. To achieve this their method is to paint a very black picture of Russia's own past and of terrible conditions in the capitalist countries thus making the low standard of living in the Soviet Union appear as a definite improvement and a constructive achievement. By comparing, for instance, the social conditions in Great Britain around 1850 with present day conditions in Russia, they give an appearance of veracity to what is a deliberate distortion. And what reasons may a Soviet citizen have to doubt the veracity of Dickens' writings, for instance? How is he to know that things have changed in England since Dickens' days?

The preaching of philosophical materialism plays an important part in Soviet education. Nothing can be more naive than the view held by some people that Communism and the Christian faith are compatible. One cannot at one and the same time preach love and class warfare; believe that universal love and tolerance are the highest ideals, and incite the workers to wipe out their capitalist oppressors; reconcile the idea of man's spiritual freedom with the inescapable determinism of Scientific Socialism. But first and foremost, no Communist can tolerate the very notion that there is something superior to Communism, that the supreme authority is vested in the commandments of Christian morality, not in "the laws" of Scientific Socialism. Such tolerance would mean that in cases of a conflict of loyalties, the Soviet citizen might fall away from Com-



munism, follow the lead of the Church, obey Christ, not Stalin. Such an attitude would jeopardize the very existence of the Communist state.

To wipe out religious feeling is a political necessity for Communism. Naturally, education, more than anything else, is called upon to foster materialism. I was greatly impressed by the effectiveness of the methods used. In the course of some thirty years it has undoubtedly succeeded in wiping out religious sentiment among scores of millions of young people, and this without being *aggressively* anti-religious, largely through the same subtle methods that are used in indoctrinating the youth with Scientific Socialism.

I have not found any aggressive anti-religious propaganda in Soviet school-books, no vast arrays of arguments put forth to "prove" that the idea of God was false. Yet in all text books concerned with historical, political, social, and economic developments, religion was treated as a political phenomenon surviving from the backward historical epochs. The essence of religion is never discussed; it is always presented as a sort of a political program of the clergy, a faithful ally of the ruling classes for whose benefit it exploited the primitive "superstitions" of the uneducated masses, their ignorance and fear of death. Thus, instead of being invited to discuss the problem of God, the Soviet youth is skilfully guided into condemning the clergy. He loses sight of the independent religious problem which is presented as a mere component of the general political background. Quite insensibly the feeling grows upon the young people that to admit, even in thought, that religion might be true is the same as believing that Santa Claus really exists. Is it necessary to produce proofs showing that he doesn't?

The truth of the socialist science is presented so thoroughly established by Karl Marx, so completely corroborated by all historical, social, and economic developments, as to need no further demonstration. The falsehood of religion, alleged to be no more than a political program, is, on the other hand, described as so evident, that the mere fact that one could take it seriously would only serve to show one's intellectual backwardness.

Philosophically weak and morally dishonest as this method is, it is extremely effective. It strengthens the child's self-respect by inculcating a sense of superiority, by imparting to the young the belief that they must take the lead in the world's intellectual progress. Thus, in addition to the task of fighting the capitalist oppressors, the child's duty is also to combat philosophical error.

Communism is a logical and comprehensive system. Once its premises—Scientific Socialism and philosophic materialism—are accepted, there are ready-made answers to everything. Since there is no God, there are no absolute values—morals become purely utilitarian. The highest purpose in life is to promote “the greatest good of the greatest number.” But it is scientifically established that only Communism can achieve this. Hence the logical conclusion: everything that promotes Communism is good and moral, everything that hampers its progress is evil and immoral.

Internationalism is another important feature of the Communist ideology upon which considerable emphasis is laid in Soviet education. In a masterly parallel drawn between Hitler’s and Stalin’s dictatorships, Churchill pointed out that Communism was something much more formidable than National-Socialism, because the latter had no fundamental theme acceptable to peoples outside of Germany, while Communism was an international doctrine which had an important following in every country. A description of Communism as a form of Russian imperialism is not only wrong but also dangerous, because it sets many people on a false trail.

Soviet teachers and school books never exalt Russia. The very word “Russia” is banned. Russia is always referred to as the “Soviet Union.” In the history text books long chapters are devoted to the description of the oppression by the Tsarist government of the Ukrainians, Belorussians, and other minorities. The Soviet government requires from its citizens strict allegiance to the Soviet State—not to Russia—because the Soviet State is allegedly the only free, happy, prosperous, and truly democratic state in the world, not because it is the territory where the citizen happens to be born, or where his forefathers had toiled, lived, suffered, and died. The citizen’s duty is political allegiance *before* national allegiance.

That Russia happened to be the first state to achieve Communism is no more than an historical accident. The history text books dwell at great length on what the authors describe as Lenin’s masterly policy of defeatism during the First World War. All Soviet historians lavish praise upon Lenin for having allied himself with the forces which were fighting the Tsarist government (that is with the Germans who were fighting Russia). The fact that the Tsarist government had been replaced, in February, 1917, by a democratic government, and that the subsequent Communist coup, in October of the same year, was directed against a democracy and not against the Tsar, is brushed aside with the remark that the government

established in February, 1917, was a degenerate "bourgeois" government, a bastard child of Tsarism.

What Soviet leaders are trying to do is to transform national sentiment, through persistent indoctrination, into a sort of international, "political patriotism," which calls for political loyalty transcending all national boundaries. A Communist's native land is not the spot where he happened to be born, but the Soviet political system. He is disloyal to his own country, not accidentally, but logically and deliberately, or else he is not a genuine Communist. The fact that during the last war Stalin appealed to the national sentiment of the Russian people, calling upon them to defend "the sacred soil of our motherland" is only a proof that in this important respect Soviet education has been far from successful. As for Communism, by its very nature it cannot, and never will, give up internationalism. Very soon after the end of hostilities, the Communist Party reverted to the old line, condemned the nationalist "deviations," and wiped out those who had erred on the nationalist side. The international doctrine, purified and reformulated, was reinstated once again as one of the cornerstones of Communism. Actually, it has never been revoked.

It is not easy to ascertain to what extent a young Soviet citizen loves his country because it is Communist, and to what extent—simply because it is his country. From my experience, I have gained the impression that both emotions often co-exist, but, of course, no Soviet teacher or pupil would dare to confess that he loves his country, because it is his country and not because it is a Communist state.

The political factor is always uppermost in the mind of the Soviet educator. The humanities and the social sciences have become in the Soviet Union a vehicle for promoting and strengthening the Communist background of the young Soviet citizens. To be sure, the Soviet leaders are also fully aware of the importance of pure and applied science, of medicine, and particularly of technology. These bulk large in the Soviet curriculum. The defender of Communism must possess a technical equipment at least as good as that of his western brethren to whose future enslavement he has to apply all his energies, never forgetting that the working people the world over longingly await for the hour of their liberation from capitalism by his strong and determined hand.

How was it possible to build up such a system of education? The answer is simple. By shutting Russia off from the rest of the world,

by the strictest of censorships, by wiping out all open opposition, by subjecting to close inspection everybody's activity, the Soviet authorities have succeeded in creating a truly diabolical system of education designed to turn out robots equipped with a synthetic philosophy of life, good technological skill, and actuated by a sense of mission as strong and urgent as the impelling faith of the early Christian missionaries.

# The Northern Sea Route

BY TREVOR LLOYD

The Tsarist government had the most powerful icebreakers in the world built abroad, in England, but was unable to make use of them. . . . The Soviet workers in the Arctic have been able to use icebreakers in the North Arctic Ocean with great success.<sup>1</sup>

So runs the popular refrain about the modern development of the sea route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans along the northern coast of Eurasia. There is the implied assumption that the possibility of using the route was not considered until after the First World War and that since then its operation has been continuous, successful, and routine. The truth is, of course, somewhere in between the two versions. Unfortunately, it is difficult to secure recent information on which to base a careful judgment.

The outstanding reason for establishing a "Northern Sea Route" is that the shortest way from Western U.S.S.R. to the Far East by sea lies through polar waters. From Murmansk to Vladivostok by the northern route is about 6,000 miles, while it is about 14,000 miles by way of the Indian Ocean or the Panama Canal. By a southerly route it is about 9,000 miles from Odessa to Vladivostok. The shortness of the northern route is difficult to believe when one uses the customary Mercator projection maps, where there is tremendous exaggeration in high latitudes; it is obvious when one looks at a globe.

The northern route recommends itself to the government of the U.S.S.R. for additional and very practical reasons, some of which no doubt are:—

1. The whole of the route lies within Soviet-controlled waters, well protected from enemies in wartime and guarded from prying eyes in time of peace.
2. The natural resources of Northern Asia can be tapped by way of the long northward-flowing rivers and gathered at ports built at their mouths.
3. The route itself, and the seaports, polar stations, and navigation aids provide bases for the exploration and occupation of the far north, which is essential if sovereignty is to be maintained.

<sup>1</sup>Semion Joffe, *The Northern Sea Route as a Transportation Problem*, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1936, p. 22.



4. The route provides a link with the native people of the north coast and hastens their absorption into the Soviet system.

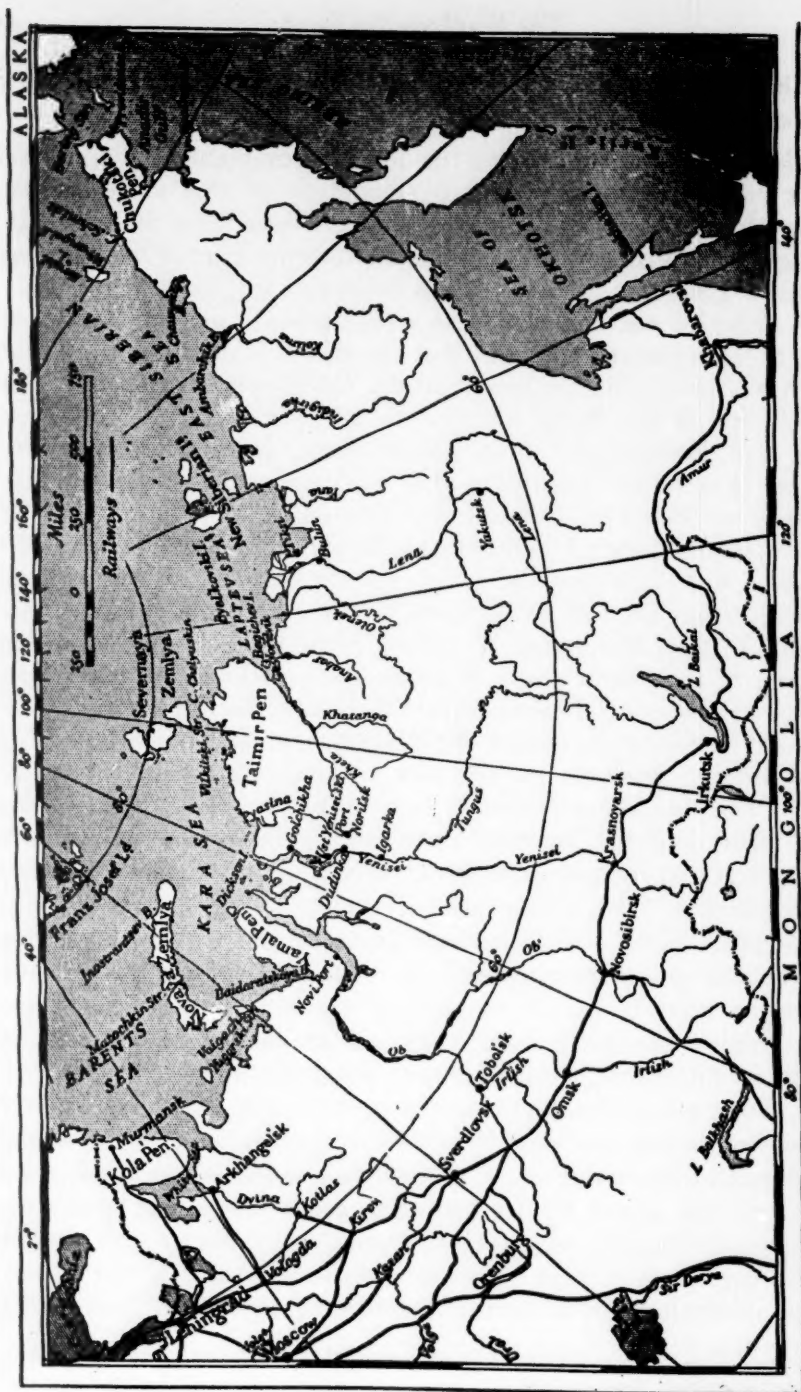
While it is understandable for foreign commentators to attach great military importance to development of this arctic seaway across the top of the world, Soviet writers have from the beginning stressed the considerable economic advantages that it might bring. In the long run it is these that must determine its failure or success.

In order to see contemporary developments in perspective, we need to learn something about Russian efforts to navigate the waters north of Eurasia, before Soviet times. Geographers are agreed that the climate of the Arctic has become warmer in the past half-century, and increasingly so in recent years. It is, therefore, useful to bear in mind the possibility that navigation in polar seas is temporarily somewhat less difficult than formerly.<sup>2</sup>

Readers of Nansen's *Through Siberia, the Land of the Future* (1914, London) will recall that the great explorer travelled in August 1913 on a trip from Tromsø, in northern Norway, through the Kara Sea, up the Yenesei River and so across Siberia to Vladivostok. The purpose of the journey was to study the possibility of opening up trade by this route between central Siberia and western Europe.

The Great War prevented the development of what promised to be a thriving business for the newly-founded Siberian Company. Sailors from northern Norway were at home in the Barents and Kara Seas, and the ice-pilot employed on Nansen's voyage was said to have navigated there for at least thirty-five years. Twenty years before, in 1893, 1500 tons of steel rails needed for construction of the trans-Siberian Railway had been carried by six ships from western Europe to the mouth of the Yenesei River, and thence upstream by river boats. In succeeding years other trading voyages were made successfully (twenty-two ships carried 18,000 tons of freight in 1905) and, granted stable economic and political conditions, this part of the northern sea route might well have become established before the First World War. It is noteworthy that the vessels used for crossing the Kara Sea were ordinary cargo ships and they were not aided by ice-breakers, since none were available. There were, of course, no navigation aids, and radio was not at that time in use. Two pioneer mariners whose names should not be forgotten in connection with nineteenth-century navigation of the

<sup>2</sup>H. W. Ahlmann, *Glaciological Research on the North Atlantic Coasts*, London, Royal Geographical Society, 1948.



*Sketch-map to illustrate the development of the Northern Sea Route*

Kara Sea are the Swedish scientist A. E. Nordenskjöld and Captain J. Wiggins. The former organized trading journeys in 1875 and 1876, and in 1878-79 covered the whole route from western Europe to the Pacific Ocean along the north coast of Eurasia. The latter was a strong believer in the economic future of the route and himself made ten annual voyages from England to the Yenesei and Ob rivers.

Immediately before the First World War, the Russian government began to erect the navigation aids that were essential if the route was to become successful. Marine radio stations were built on the northern shore of Vaigach Island, on the mainland coast at the east end of Yugorski Shar, at Cape Marre and on Yamal Peninsula. In 1915 an additional station was built at Dickson Island. The activities already described were, of course, limited to the western part of the northern sea route, covering the Barents Sea and Kara Sea and leading to the estuaries of the Ob and Yenesei rivers.

While trading expeditions did not venture farther east, a good deal of geographical information about the coastal waters from Dickson Island to the Pacific Ocean had already been gathered. As early as 1770, the Laptev and East Siberian Seas had been visited by the Russian trader Liakhov, who reached them from the Siberian mainland. In succeeding years Wrangel, Anjou, Hedenström, Kellett, de Long, and others shared in the exploration. Sergeev of the Russian Navy sailed from Vladivostock in 1911 with the newly-built ice-breakers *Taimyr* and *Vaigach* and surveyed the Siberian coast as far west as Cape Chelyuskin. It was at this time that the outline of the eastern coast of Severnaya Zemlya was mapped and Vilkitsky Strait was discovered. The *Taimyr* eventually reached Archangel alone, *Vaigach* having been wrecked near the Yenesei estuary.

Following understandable delays because of the First World War, interest in the northern route was reawakened in January, 1919, when a group of Russian scientists set up an organization for studying the Arctic. This eventually led to the Institute for Study of the Arctic under the direction of the renowned scientist Professor L. Samoilovich, and so to the Central Board of the Northern Sea Route, which by the middle thirties became, in effect, the governing body of a vast area north of the sixty-second parallel of latitude.

In order to appreciate the difficulties of physical geography that confront anyone endeavoring to maintain regular navigation along the northern coast of Eurasia, it may be useful to indicate their

general character. The Route begins in the west at Murmansk, which is ice-free throughout the year. From there it crosses the Barents Sea far to the north of White Sea ports such as Archangel. There are three alternative routes from the Barents Sea to the Kara Sea. Ice conditions at the opening of navigation in summer determine which shall be used. One route runs southward between Vaigach Island and the mainland (through Yugorski Shar), a second runs north of the island, while a third passes through Matochkin Shar between the southern and northern islands of Novaya Zemlya. All the routes converge on Dickson Island, but some vessels turn south to Novy Port at the entrance to the Ob River. Dickson Island is an important fuelling base and administrative center, but many vessels continue past it, going 400 miles up the Yenesei River to the lumber port Igarka.

Eastward from Dickson Island ships, aided by ice-breakers, continue through Vilkitsky Strait, passing Cape Chelyuskin where ice conditions are usually troublesome into Laptev Sea, calling at Nordvik near the mouth of the Khatanba River. Thence they proceed to Tiksi, some miles east of the Lena Delta, and passing Novosibirskie Islands, usually by Laptev Strait to Ambarchik at the mouth of the Kolyoma River. The route then follows the coast closely to Bering Strait and southward to Providence Bay (Bukhta Provideniya). From here regular shipping routes link the Northern Sea Route with Vladivostok.

Vilkitsky Strait (Proliv Borisa Vil'kitskogo) is a critical point on the northern route. To the west of it, commercial navigation during the ice-free season has become reasonably routine. As long ago as 1931 it was stated by Soviet authorities to be "a normally operating sea-route" and, while ice-breakers patrol the area, there are no serious hazards to ordinary freighters travelling from the west to Novy Port or Igarka. Islands to the north provide good protection from the heavy ice of the polar basin. Farther east there is less protection, and in the East Siberian Sea the route is very exposed.

The Route "as a whole" is stated to be open for about two and a half months in a good year, that is, from about mid-July to the end of September. Even during this period, however, it cannot be used without the complex of navigation aids devised by the Northern Sea Route Administration. These include directional radio, frequent weather and ice forecasts, reconnaissance aircraft, bunkering facilities, and the aid of ice-breakers and ice-pilots. Present use of the route is limited by the following factors, among others:

1. Sea ice (which varies greatly from year to year) and the number of ice-breakers available.
2. Fog and overcast skies, which make navigation hazardous and prevent ice-reconnaissance planes from being used for ice-spotting.
3. Shallow water where the route passes close to the coast in order to keep clear of ice fields. The maximum draft for cargo vessels in places is probably 25 feet or less.
4. Inadequate seaports and bunkering facilities and limited transportation inland from the seaports.
5. Shortage of freight and passenger vessels designed for use among ice.
6. The need for vessels to operate in convoys (because of insufficient ice-breakers). This is a great handicap in the short navigation season available in the best of years.

Little needs to be said here about the need for increased knowledge of the physical geography of the seas north of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet authorities are doubtless fully aware of this and strive to fill the many gaps in knowledge of shoreline configuration, ocean depths, currents, movements of ice, and so forth. This is necessarily very slow work and, as those familiar with the North American Arctic know, cannot be done in a hurry. At present as much or more is known about the seas north of the U.S.S.R. as about the seas around Arctic North America. Exploration is going forward steadily. Charts are available (in Soviet pilot books) showing temperature, salinity, density, and other information for each of the Soviet Arctic seas for July, August, September, and October, and reasonably good hydrographic charts are published.<sup>3</sup>

Early in the past war maps of the western part of the Sea Route showed fifteen directional radio stations on the coast and islands west of Dickson Island and about 150 occulting lights, together with a number of stationary lights, beacons, and buoys. This is reasonably good coverage when one recalls that summer days are long in the far north and navigation lights less necessary than elsewhere. Weather maps in regular use in western Europe show Soviet meteorological stations along the western part of the Sea Route at approx-

<sup>3</sup>See Terence Armstrong, "Hydrological Work in the Soviet Arctic, 1920-1945," *The Polar Record*, Vol. V, Nos. 37-38, pp. 355-360. For a valuable review of several Soviet books on the Arctic, see D. B. Shimkin, "Five Books on the Soviet North," *Arctic*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 65-69.



imately as frequent intervals as in other areas of high latitude (again rather more frequently than in Arctic North America).

Regular use of the Northern Sea Route necessarily depends on the provision of good seaports, as well as on a multiplicity of aids to navigation. It is worth remembering that Papanin, speaking in 1939, said, "We have no ports yet on the Northern Sea Route; we are only now constructing them." The most important ports originated or expanded since 1919 are the following (all of them were in existence in 1937); they are listed from west to east: Amderma, Novy Port, Dickson Island, Dudinka, Igarka, Nordvik, Tiksi, Ambarchik, Providence Bay.

There is no agreement among authorities about the relative importance of the various ports. Their location is, of course, determined largely by the need for linking the sea route with routes inland up the large rivers. There are also bases for ice-breakers, centers for coal and oil fuelling, administrative centers and, in addition, scientific headquarters for many distinct groups of research workers. That in 1940 the need to improve facilities was recognized is illustrated by the following quotation:—"For the full utilization of the Northern Sea Route further development is necessary in setting up ports and lighthouses; in the careful study of the conditions of navigation and ice movement; in supplying the route with ice-breakers, airplanes . . . and air bases." (Balzac, *Economic Geography of the U.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1940.)

The following notes about the ports listed above are merely indicative of their function, equipment or stage of development.

*Amderma*—70°N. 62°E. Is mainly used for export of fluorite from local mines. Coal is available from the Pechora field.

*Novy Port*—68°N. 73°E. Opened in 1923 as a polar scientific station, it later was expanded into a lumber-exporting base for the Ob River region. Before the last war there were good berths for deep-draft ocean-going vessels, together with radio and meteorological stations and a scientific centre. Fish canning is important. Novy Port is the northern terminus of the air-route along the Ob River valley.

*Dickson Island*—74°N. 80°E. A radio station was opened here in 1915, but the site was not developed until work began on the Northern Sea Route. The harbor is open for two or three months from the end of July, but owing to its shallowness can only be entered by vessels drawing 24 feet or less. The port is well equipped

with wharves, conveyors, oil and coal bunkers, a repair shop, and an electrical power station. There is a well-equipped geophysical centre which coordinates the work of many smaller scientific stations. As long ago as 1936, H. P. Smolka wrote that there were 200 residents, of whom 25 were women, and that at the time of his visit there were twenty-two ships in port.

*Dudinka*—69°N. 86°E. This is a river port on the right bank of the Yenesei. As it is only incidentally a part of the Northern Sea Route, it will not be described here.

*Igarka*—67°N. 87°E. Also a port on the right bank of the Yenesei, but 150 miles upstream from Dudinka. It is the main lumber port on the Route and is the terminus for many vessels crossing the Kara Sea from European ports. It is reasonably well-known and has been described by many writers, using data from prewar years. The population is about 20,000.

*Nordvik*—73° 30' N. 113°E. While the sea at this point (near the mouth of the Khatanga River) is free of ice by mid-July, navigation is said to be safe for only a little over four weeks. Construction of the port began in 1936. There are local occurrences of coal and salt. It is suggested that oil may have been found. Coal and lignite occur nearby. The radio station is important.

*Tiksi*—72°N. 129°E. This is the chief port for the eastern section of the Northern Sea Route Administration. It is ice-free for about 75 days. Work on the port began in 1933 and it was reasonably well advanced by the beginning of the last war, but it could not admit the largest vessels using the route. Since then it is understood to have been dredged, and a canal is believed to have been cut to link it with the Lena River. It is important as a coaling depot, and although at one time it used coal imported from the west, it is now stated to use that from the Sangar-Khai field in the Lena Valley. Tiksi owes much of its importance to the location as a meeting place for sea-going vessels and the Lena River boats.

*Ambarchik*—69°N. 160°E. Founded as a polar station on the Kolyma estuary in 1935, beginning in the following year it was expanded to a port. Although fifty miles from the mouth of the river, it is the entrepôt for supplies going up-river to Verkne-Kolymsk and farther south. Its use may be in part that of a "back-door" entrance to the territory inland from the east coast of Siberia. In 1942 at least one vessel reached the port from the United States northwest coast, and returned in about ten weeks.

*Providence Bay*—64° 30' N. 173°W. A polar station existed here in 1934, but the port was not begun until 1937. It is important as the eastern terminus of the Northern Sea Route, 3,460 miles from Murmansk. The port is open from early in June until early in October. It was at one time the main base for operations of the large ice-breaker *L. Kaganovich*. Visiting seafarers seeing the port during the last war were not impressed with the wharves and other marine facilities, although elaborate plans for their expansion had been published some time before.

Data about commercial shipping which has used all or a part of the Northern Sea Route is far from complete. Fairly full information for years up to 1935 was published in Semion Joffe's pamphlet already referred to. He provides much useful information, in three tables:

1. Kara Sea Operations. Number of ships and freight in tons.
2. Northeastern Arctic Trips, voyages from Vladivostok to the Kolyma, the Lena and Wrangel Island, giving the year (1911 to 1935), number of ships, destination, length of stay in Arctic seas, and the amount of freight in tons.
3. Through passages of ships over the Northern Sea Route from the Novozemelskie Straits to the Bering Straits (until 1935). This lists ten vessels, beginning with Nordensjöld's *Vega* in 1878-9 and ending with *Iskra* in 1935.

After 1935 the data are not so readily available, partly because journeys were undoubtedly more routine, and partly because the world war intervened. Since the end of the war the Soviets have been notoriously uncommunicative about the Northern Sea Route, as about other matters. It may be of interest to mention some of the voyages known to have taken place, and in one case to provide details not readily available to many readers.

1936, the year following the last one reported on by Joffe, was most unfortunate for northern navigation. Although 160 ships were here or there in northern waters and about 271,000 tons of cargo were carried, ice was bad even in the Kara Sea. The Lena-Kolyma convoy from the west was unable to get through heavy pack lying to the east of Scott Hansen Island until early in September, in spite of the use of five ice-breakers. Farther east, conditions were better and ships passing Cape Chelyuskin on September 13th reached Bering Strait on October 6th. Fourteen ships made the through voyage, including ice-breakers and research ships. Three

flotillas of merchantmen were reported to have spent the winter in the Laptev Sea, a sojourn that must have been as unpleasant politically as it undoubtedly was climatically. Plans for the following year were understandably modest and included the passage of only three vessels from the west and two from the east. In addition, eight ships carrying 34,000 tons were to reach the Lena from the west and ten to reach the Kolyma, two of them from the east. As in the previous year, ice conditions were not favorable. Two ships made the through passage, 26 ships (including six ice-breakers) wintered at various points along the route, and two were lost. In the following year (1938) matters were more encouraging. Two convoys of ten ships each made the through voyage from west to east, including two transports, four dredgers, two tugs, and ten mine-sweepers. These convoys were reported to have taken a month for the entire trip from Murmansk to Providence Bay. They were accompanied by the ice-breaker *Josef Stalin*. The next year was probably unsatisfactory, as only four ships were said to have made the complete passage, while twenty were held up for the winter at Igarka and Kahtanga. During 1940, one hundred ships were said to be active at one point or another along the route. In 1942, four ships travelled from Providence Bay to Murmansk and none the other way. There is reason to believe that military use of the Route at this time was considerable, although details are not available.

Even in good years, successful use of the more difficult parts of the Route depends on the quality of ice-breakers available. The Soviets have always recognized this, and have made strenuous efforts, with considerable success, to provide themselves with suitable vessels. This is not the place to describe the various ice-breakers employed along the Route following the end of the First World War, but it may be useful to summarize the position as it was in 1934, when there were no Soviet-built ice-breakers. It is important to recognize that all vessels used for forcing a passage through ice are not of the same design. There are two main types—the “ice-forcing” and the “ice-crushing” types. The former are usually lighter, less well powered and cannot operate in heavy Arctic ice with much success, but they are adequate for river and harbor work. Ice-crushing ships, which include all the new United States and Soviet ice-breakers, are intended for work in the open ocean. Although their capacity for making headway in Arctic ice has often been exaggerated, they are still capable of remarkable performances. A

factor which is sometimes overlooked is that skill on the part of the ice-pilots and other ships' officers is as important with very large ice-breakers as with the sealers and whalers of a hundred years ago. Ignorance of this has put powerful ships, both in northern Russia and in northern North America, into situations from which they have been very lucky to extricate themselves.

In 1934 the Soviets announced plans to construct six ice-breakers of new design. Up until that time all of their vessels had been obtained in one way or another from abroad. Most famous of them all was *Yermak* built to Russian designs at Newcastle, England, in 1899. Others, with the date of launching, were *Davydov* (1897), *Litke* (1908), *Taimyr* (1908), *Malyguin* (1912), *Sadko* (1913), *Krasin* (1917), *Lenin* (1917). It is of interest to note that *Litke*, which became world-famous in 1934 as the first vessel to make a voyage through the Northern Sea Route from Vladivostok to Murmansk in one season, was originally the *Lord Grey*, and served as a Canadian government ice-forcing vessel in the St. Lawrence River until given to Russia in 1916. It is a tribute to her Soviet operators that a vessel of such modest specifications should have made such an impressive journey. Beginning in 1937, new Soviet ice-breakers began to appear. First to be launched from the Baltic yard was *Josef Stalin*, of about 11,000 tons and powered with 10,000 h.p. engines operating through two propellers aft and one forward. Vessels of this class have two or three catapult aircraft, are able to do 10 to 15 knots, and have sufficient fuel for about 30,000 miles. Other vessels of the same type are *V. Molotov* (1937), *L. Kaganovich* (1937) and *A. Mikoyan* (1940)—this latter vessel was launched as the *O. Schmidt*, but changes in the political fortunes of that famous Arctic scientist led to the new title. The *Mikoyan* was launched at the Marti yards at Nikolaevsk and made a remarkable voyage before reaching the western end of the Northern Sea Route. It left the Black Sea in 1941, pursued by Nazi aircraft, and managed to reach Haifa in Palestine, whence it travelled through the Suez Canal to South Africa, then around Cape Horn to Seattle. From there, after some engineering work, it continued by the northern route to Archangel. Other Soviet ice-breakers which visited North America during the war years included the *J. Stalin* and *Krasin*.<sup>4</sup>

The very important part played by such vessels along the Northern Sea Route is well illustrated by the voyage of a Nazi commerce-

<sup>4</sup>The United States lent three modern ice-breakers to U.S.S.R. during the war—they included *Westwind* and *Southwind*. Canada gave an ice-breaker in 1942.



raider that travelled from Europe to the Pacific Ocean in 1940. An account of the journey has been published in *The Polar Record*,<sup>5</sup> and it may be of interest to outline the facts here.

The German High Command early in 1940 wished to send two vessels into the Pacific Ocean from the Baltic, without danger of their being detected or sunk by the British. Following negotiations with the Soviet authorities, one vessel, the *Komet*, a merchantman converted for use as a raider, was ordered to report at the entrance of Yugorski Shar on July 15, 1940. To judge the success of the voyage, it is important to note certain details about the ship and its complement. Of 3300 tons, the *Komet* was capable of a top speed of 14 knots. Her hull had been strengthened somewhat against being crushed by ice, and her screw and rudder were perhaps stronger than is usual, but she was in essence a merchantman. Her commander was an experienced northern navigator who had sailed in East Greenland waters. He was also a trained hydrographer. The Russian interpreter had apparently some personal knowledge of the route. From Gdynia, Poland, the *Komet* travelled without incident to Barents Sea in ample time to keep the rendezvous agreed on. However, before July 15 it was told by radio that ice conditions in the Kara Sea were severe and so it would not be needed until August 1st. It was actually the thirteenth before the captain was ordered to Matochkin Shar, although he knew from radio messages that other vessels had been operating successfully in the Kara Sea for some time before. Russian ice pilots took his ship through the strait to Kara Sea and for 160 miles or so eastward, until heavy ice forced them to return to the strait and wait. It is interesting to note that both the ice-breaker *Ÿ. Stalin* and the *Lenin* were at the time in different parts of Kara Sea, but that their work was handicapped by fog which "grounded" their reconnaissance planes.

On August 19th the *Komet* was under way again and continued east for 200 miles before meeting ice. It reached Dickson Island alone without any difficulty, and continued directly to Arkhipelag Nordenshel'da. The vessel waited there three days for *Lenin*, and then followed her eastward. The strait north of Cape Chelyuskin was free from ice, an unusual state of affairs, and was passed on August 25th. The following day the *Ÿ. Stalin* took over the convoy work from *Lenin* and the two vessels continued eastward. After

<sup>5</sup>Vol. 5, Nos. 37-38, pp. 291-295. See also: Kurt Ruthe, "Die Fahrt des Hilfskreuzers 'Komet' durch die Nordostpassage." *Polarforschung*, Jahry. 13, Heft 1, 1943, pp. 5-7.

passing through about 200 miles of ice, clear water followed and *Komet* went on alone. On August 28th Sannikov Strait was reached, and there the ice-breaker *Malyguin* was stationed ready to be of assistance, but as she was a slow vessel, and there was little ice, *Komet* went on alone.

Along this part of the coast the navigators of *Komet* reported very shallow water which forces deep draft vessels to keep a long way offshore—and so run the risk of trouble in the Arctic pack ice. The *Komet* took the most careful soundings throughout its voyage and found that the Soviet charts in use at that time were often inaccurate. On August 30 the German vessel was met by *L. Kaganovich* some distance west of the Kolyma estuary. From there on for two days the pack ice was very heavy, the weather was stormy and the course lay close inshore. On September 1st, at a time when the ice was almost at its worst, the Director of Operations of the eastern part of the Northern Sea Route, who was on the *Kaganovich*, informed the Commander of *Komet* that owing to the presence of enemy vessels in Bering Strait the voyage could not be continued. After some days of parleying, the Soviet vessels finally agreed to lead the way as far eastward as Mys Shelagski. From there on navigation conditions appeared to be very favorable. On September 3, without the Russian ice-pilots or aid from ice-breakers, the Nazi vessel continued alone. On September 5, *Komet* reached Providence Bay, having completed the journey from Matochkin Shar in twenty-one and a half days—with actual steaming time about seven days less. This was the fastest recorded voyage along the route up to that time. It is of special interest, since it illustrates what can be done with favorable ice conditions, the aid of ice-breakers, and the full service of weather and ice reports provided from many northern observing stations and ships. Terence Armstrong, who wrote the article in *The Polar Record*, is not clear about the motives which led the Soviets to approve the passage of *Komet* and then attempt to block it. He stresses the value of the voyage as a non-Soviet record of the practicability of the Route. One result of the voyage was the appearance in Germany, in 1943, of an improved guidebook to the Northern Sea Route (*Handbuch des Sibirischen Seeweges*).

Although details about contemporary activities along the Northern Sea Route are not readily available, the writer believes that this is in part because of the lack, in North America, of enough interested students able to read Russian. There is a great deal of information,

in Soviet textbooks and technical journals, lying unused because of this serious "curtain" that cuts so many off from available sources of information. If a student, reasonably familiar with the geography of the Soviet Arctic, and competent to read Russian publications, is searching for a worthy topic on which to practice his skill, he could not do better than search the literature for information published since 1940 on operation of the Northern Sea Route. I believe that he and his readers would be richly rewarded.

# Plekhanov and American Socialism\*

BY DAVID HECHT

AMONG the most striking phenomena that we encounter in the history of the modern Russian revolutionary movement are the persistent interest and the fluctuating opinions of the revolutionary leaders in regard to the prospects of Socialism in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Was Socialism necessary for the future well-being of the transatlantic republic? Was it possible to achieve a Socialist society in the United States? If so, what tactics were needed to attain such a new social order—peaceful means or those of violent revolution?

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, these and related questions continued to trouble the minds of many leading Russian revolutionaries, including now the Marxian Socialists. And the answers to these questions were not only important in their own right; they had bearing upon the possibilities of a Socialist victory in Russia. Could conditions in America, any American experience or institution ease the course of or help further the prospects of the revolution in Russia, so ardently desired?

George Plekhanov, the gifted founder of Russian Marxism, displayed an extended interest in this general subject of Socialism in America. Plekhanov had early transferred his doctrinal allegiances from Populism to Marxism. As will become clear, however, his Marxian revolutionary beliefs tended to "moderation" when it came to the United States. This was certainly not in disharmony with the Menshevik leanings of the last fifteen years of his life. A man of erudition and wit, Plekhanov was highly respected in the European Socialist movement up to the time of his death in 1918. What he had to say counted, even when he shifted ground as he sometimes did.

The Russian knew English and was well informed about various phases of American life through a wide reading—which included such key studies as de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Hillquit's *History of American Socialism*. While there was a time in

\*This article is a preliminary sketch of one aspect of Plekhanov's views of American life. A fuller study will eventually appear in a larger-scale work.

<sup>1</sup>For the varying attitudes of Herzen, Bakunin, Chernyshevsky, and other mid-nineteenth century Russian rebels towards some of these issues, see the author's *Russian Radicals Look to America*, Cambridge, 1947.

the 1890's when Plekhanov thought seriously of settling in the United States, he never actually took such a drastic step.<sup>2</sup> Plekhanov did, however, have personal contacts with prominent American Socialists such as "Big Bill" Haywood.<sup>3</sup> There were also many Europeans who had journeyed to the New World who became sources of information for Plekhanov's probing mind and who kept him informed about conditions in the United States. Conspicuous among these was the noted Dr. Sergei Ingerman who from his vantage point in New York City wrote many penetrating comments about American life to Plekhanov and the other leaders of the Liberation of Labor group.<sup>4</sup>

Almost from the very outset of his revolutionary career, Plekhanov was to deal with the problem of attaining Socialism in the United States. In the early 1880's he noted the existence of "workers' agitation in America" during the preceding decade and in "Socialism and the Political Struggle," discussed the "social democracy" of America, grouping it with that of Europe. He asserted that "in all the leading states in the civilized world, in Europe as well as in America, the working class" was "entering the arena of political struggle, and the more consciously" it was "concerned about its economic problems, the more decisively" did it move in the direction of a "special political party of its own."<sup>5</sup>

In these early pronouncements, Plekhanov was already upholding the banner of not just any type of workers' action but specifically of Marxian revolutionary Socialism.<sup>6</sup> Expressions of this kind which acknowledged the existence of the American working class move-

<sup>2</sup>See the correspondence with Wilhelm Liebknecht, Eleanor-Marx Aveling and Dr. Ingerman in *Literaturnoe Nasledie G. V. Plekhanova*, ed. P. F. Iudin, I. D. Udaltsov and R. M. Plekhanova, Moscow, 1937, vol. IV, pp. 276-277; 278-280; 282-283.

<sup>3</sup>See *Sochineniya G. V. Plekhanova*, ed. D. Riazanov, Moscow, 1925, vol. XVI, p. 372.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Ingerman's letter of May 5, 1891, to Plekhanov, Akselrod, and Zasulich in *Literaturnoe Nasledie*, vol. I, pp. 245-250.

<sup>5</sup>*Sochineniya*, vol. I, pp. 65; 106; 125.

<sup>6</sup>See *ibid.* and vol. III, p. 48. Polemical attacks against non-Marxian American radicals such as Benjamin Tucker and Henry George abound, scattered through Plekhanov's writings. See, for example, *Sochineniya*, vol. XVI, pp. 182-188 and vol. XV, p. 71.

Actually, the abandonment during the 1880's even within the Liberation of Labor group of the old Populist theories may have taken longer than has commonly been thought. See Dr. Ingerman's testimony in *Literaturnoe Nasledie*, vol. I, pp. 250-252.



ment in the eighties of the last century and furthermore grouped it with that of Europe are fairly numerous. We shall confine ourselves at this point to one more such statement. Writing in 1890 to commemorate the recently established May Day demonstrations, Plekhanov declared that

the spectre of Communism is now haunting not only the European lords and bourgeoisie. Even the New World has become acquainted with it—North America, the country of dollars and rapid profits. The practical Yankees have forgotten all shame and every tradition of political freedom since they noticed the bugbear of Communism. The judicial murder of the Anarchists in Chicago showed that in the struggle for existence, all means are as good for the American bourgeoisie as for the European. "The spectre" of Communism has become a universal guest; the workers' question has become a universal question in the full sense of the word.<sup>7</sup>

Without any doubt here was a passionate castigation of the American bourgeoisie and, at the same time, a firm insistence upon the universality of the "workers' question." Even so, Plekhanov's thought was occasionally resilient enough to appreciate national differences. He did believe that the cloth of Marxian revolutionary strategy might have to be tailored and altered to fit the patterns of different nations. The United States, despite her full-blown capitalist apparatus, did represent some knotty problems for the Russian Marxist.

In verification of this assertion we may consider the Appeal made in 1886 on behalf of the Liberation of Labor group by Plekhanov and Akselrod to the emigrant Russian workers in America.<sup>8</sup> The tone in this instance will strike the reader as rather different from that in the passage just quoted. Amidst the general condemnation of American capitalism we do find laudatory expressions in relation to American life, at least in regard to the existence and exercise of political liberties.<sup>9</sup> Beyond this, certain factors were

<sup>7</sup>*Sochineniya*, vol. IV, p. 125.

<sup>8</sup>*Perepiska G. V. Plekhanova i P. B. Akselroda*, ed. P. A. Berlin, V. S. Voitinsky and B. I. Nikolaevsky, vol. I, pp. 218-221. All citations from the Appeal are taken from these pages.

<sup>9</sup>Of course, these will seem to contradict the scornful remarks of 1890 which, as we have just observed, Plekhanov uttered—in his reaction to the judicial severities consequent upon the Chicago Haymarket Affair. Yet even then, careful examination reveals that Plekhanov wrote as though American political freedoms *had* been a living reality. Furthermore, in that very same year (1890), the Russian Marxist was able to assert that "never having known feudal or patriarchal relations, America represents one of those exceptions which only confirms the general rule." *Sochineniya*, vol. VI, p. 410. And as late as 1906, we find Plekhanov commenting that

present in the American scene from which the Russian Social-Democratic revolutionaries could benefit.

The Appeal began with a recital of the terrible conditions under the Tsars which had caused the Russian workers to abandon their homeland and to emigrate to such a country as the United States. But having left Russia, the authors of the "Appeal" insisted, did not mean that the emigrants had lost interest in the fate of the struggles of those who had remained to fight against oppression. "Forced to forsake your fatherland, you cannot however remain indifferent to her subsequent fate. . . . Having personally experienced the savage arbitrariness of tsarist-police absolutism, you cannot but sympathize with the daring struggle of the Russian revolutionaries. . . . The very position of things makes revolutionaries out of you."

Once having established this point, Plekhanov and Akselrod went on to indicate that "the conscious revolutionary" had to know to what he was aspiring—that it was not enough simply to want to destroy the old order in Russia. It was also necessary for him "to be clear about what arrangements would have to take their place." And, "in this respect, life abroad, especially in America," could "lighten his task significantly." The elaboration of this argument followed: "A free, republican order exists in the United States; the inhabitants are not called subjects, but citizens; they have political rights which not one official can violate without being punished."

Despite the existence of these civil freedoms, however, it was

completely impossible to consider such arrangements as the height of human happiness. You see that even in the United States, the freest of all countries, the yoke of capital continues to press down upon the working class. The men of labor, by whose hands all social wealth is created, remain in poverty while their exploiters enjoy all the good things of life. The very same thing also occurs in the other countries of the West, and against this economic inequality, against this economic exploitation, everywhere, the most advanced representatives of the working class carry on the struggle. In America and in Europe . . . the workers gather together under the banner of social democracy. . . .

We are convinced, comrades, that once you have clarified for yourselves the meaning of this great struggle you will stand wholly on the side of that class

England and the United States "have been . . . and still are in an exceptional economic position, as a result of which the ideological backwardness of their proletariat is also explained." *Sochineniya*, vol. XVI, p. 235n. Note the use of the word, "exceptional"!

to which you yourselves belong; we think that even now, many of you with full justice already call yourselves social-democrats.

We also sympathize with the universal struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie; we also have the honor of belonging to the social democracy. . . . we should like to enter into closer relations with you. . . .

The Appeal then turned to a brief description of the history and activities of the Liberation of Labor group. Its "direct and immediate task" was "the publication of books and pamphlets for the developed section of the Russian workers and for the intelligentsia from the possessing classes." And notwithstanding the heavy obstacles of working against the "Anarchist prejudices" which "infected the Russian revolutionaries," wrote Plekhanov and Akselrod, "success surpassed" their "expectations." These successes included the formation of "several secret workers' circles" in Russia which had "accepted the social-democratic program" and the establishment of a "secret social-democratic newspaper."

An invocation of meaningful historical analogies closed the Appeal:

We appeal to you . . . to support this work. You know how the Irish who have settled in America help the revolutionary movement in Ireland. You know that thousands of German settlers organize social-democratic unions and cooperate energetically with the workers' movement in Germany. Follow their example: organize a Russian workers' social-democratic union and try to enter into a federative bond with the Liberation of Labor group, whose publication and program we are sending you. Through this group you will also enter into relations with the social-democrats who are active in Russia.

Once more we repeat that we are appealing to all of you without any distinction in regard to your racial origin. We are working in the interests of the entire working class of Russia. . . .

We await fraternal, moral, and material aid from you.

Thus Plekhanov and Akselrod were urging the Russian emigrants in America to unite into a Social Democratic organization and then to become affiliated with the spearhead Liberation of Labor group on two bases: the sympathy which these emigrants were supposed to have retained for the Russian revolutionary movement (and, as a corollary, the world-wide workers' revolutionary movement) and because of the objective conditions of economic exploitation in the United States. But in reality, the authors of the Appeal appeared to conceive of this revolutionary movement, at that time and in the near future, in "the freest of all countries" as fundamentally an adjunct to the revolutionary movement in Russia and not one destined in the first instance to play an organic, autonomous American role. The remarks concerning the Irish and Germans in Amer-

ica and the final call for aid assume the utmost significance in this connection.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, and in conjunction with this concept, is it not possible that Plekhanov and Akselrod, while certainly believing Socialism to be both necessary and desirable for America, still considered the future American Socialist revolution as too remote a target accurately to aim for at that time? And finally, in this presentation, it is not made clear whether the American structure of civil liberties was to be overthrown in the future revolution, along with the capitalist economic system, or not.

This ambiguity crops up again. In a polemic which Plekhanov directed against the Anarchists, in 1894, he advocated moderation in regard to "force and violence":

The workers of Western Europe and of North America do not have to destroy machines in order not to be thrashed by their bosses: they possess numerous legal means of conducting the struggle against their exploiters. To renounce the use of these means—which are the conquests of the working classes—would mean to surrender to the bourgeoisie those rights which were won at the price of so many heavy sacrifices; it would mean to commit incomparable stupidity, which the proletariat will never commit. . . .<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, a strongly formulated belief in the probable ultimate need for violent means to attain Socialism in America is to be found in Plekhanov's attempted refutation, in 1900, of the reformist views of strategy and tactics then gaining favor in Western European Socialist circles:

Bernstein thinks that in contemporary countries [such as France or the United States] the working class does not need violence to achieve its goals. This is too optimistic a view . . . let us take . . . the United States of North America. This is . . . a democratic country. But the liberation of the Negroes in this democratic country could be bought only at the price of civil war and it is impossible to assure that the American proletariat will not be forced to violence to clear the road for its own economic liberation.<sup>12</sup>

In this instance, Plekhanov, while hoping for a peaceful transition to Socialism, was prepared to face the genuine possibility of "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" for America.

Plekhanov's ideas on the relation of the American working

<sup>10</sup>As it turned out, money was received from America for the use of the Liberation of Labor group. See *Gruppa "Osvobozhdenie Truda,"* ed. L. G. Deich, Moscow, 1928, vol. VI, p. 302.

<sup>11</sup>*Sochineniya*, vol. IV, p. 254.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. XI, p. 320.

classes to Socialism stand out in greater relief when we consider them in juxtaposition to the famous discussion of a later day—a discussion initiated by Werner Sombart's ground-breaking articles, in which the German economic historian analyzed the reasons for the failure of Socialism to secure firm roots in the United States up to that time.<sup>13</sup> Karl Kautsky, shortly thereafter, had critically surveyed Sombart's contentions in a series of four essays, entitled "Der Amerikanische Arbeiter." These were published in the issues for February 14, 21, 28, and March 7, 1906, in the influential weekly organ of the German Social Democracy, *Die Neue Zeit*. Plekhanov was last to plunge into the controversy, with a lengthy review article published in the same year in the Moscow *Sovremennaya Zhizn*.<sup>14</sup>

After paying tribute to Kautsky's "instructive" articles, the Russian Marxist urged "everyone" who was "interested in the world-wide labor movement" to become acquainted with Sombart's study. Plekhanov hoped that it would soon be translated into Russian. Next came an appraisal of the German scholar's talent—perhaps surprisingly generous, all things considered:

I consider W. Sombart one of the most remarkable representatives of contemporary science. . . . He rests upon a bourgeois point of view. But he applies Marx's method of explaining social phenomena quite successfully—to the extent that this is not hindered by his bourgeois horizon. . . . He understands that "social man" (this expression, as is well known, belongs to Marx) changes his feelings and concepts according as his economic life changes.

*In this life* also, W. Sombart seeks the explanation for the *psychic habit of mind* of the American worker.

After these prefatory remarks, Plekhanov turned to the specific question and in his own sardonically witty style recapitulated the main threads of Sombart's argument:

Why has there been no strong Socialist party in America up to now? Certain profound economists have answered this question by pointing to the attributes of the Anglo-Saxon race: these attributes are such that the Anglo-Saxon race is incapable of being carried away by Socialism. But why does it have such attributes? Because it is practical. And from what is it apparent

<sup>13</sup>These articles, first printed in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, were quickly published in book form, with only the most minor changes. See Werner Sombart, *Warum Gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?*, Tübingen, 1906.

<sup>14</sup>See *Sochineniya*, vol. XVI, pp. 199-202. The following citations are from these pages. Plekhanov utilized the findings of Sombart's treatise elsewhere—mainly in polemics against various dissident Russian and non-Russian revolutionaries. See *Sochineniya*, vol. XV, pp. 207 ff. and Vol. XVI, p. 1.



that it is practical? From the fact, among other things, that it is not carried away by Socialism. This is an old song. Why does opium make one drowsy? Because—answers a Molière-like character—it has narcotic properties. Like a man who has tasted of good and evil from the Marxian tree of knowledge, W. Sombart clearly sees the amusing worthlessness of such explanations. He asks himself: is it really true then that the American worker belongs to the Anglo-Saxon race? And he concludes that this is not true—. . . because Anglo-Saxons are by no means the only emigrants to the United States.

And then Plekhanov—following Sombart—cited some detailed figures from the American census of 1900 to clinch his point. Beyond this, he continued:

Even if we take into consideration all of the immigration in the course of the nineteenth century, even then, the share of the Anglo-Saxon race in it is less than it has usually been accepted to have been,—says Werner Sombart. . . . Consequently, during the life of the last generation, millions of emigrants have settled in the United States who come from countries which are distinguished by the fact that Socialism has flourished in them. Within the mass of such emigrants, a very honorable place belongs to the *Germans*. Why then are the Germans very inclined to Socialism in Germany but very little inclined to it in North America? Indeed, their race hasn't changed. It is clear then that race has nothing here to do with the answer to the question as to why there is not a strong Socialist party in the United States; we should not look to the attributes of this or that *race*, but to the peculiarities of North American *social life*.

After thus condemning the assertion of any racial propensity to Socialism (mainly on statistical grounds, and making very loose usage of the term "race," from a modern anthropological viewpoint), Plekhanov resumed, coming to the heart of the discussion:

And Werner Sombart investigates these very peculiarities in his book. He points out the democratic character of North American political institutions; he notes the extremely favorable economic position of the North American worker compared to that of the European, and finally, he notes the influence of the fact that in the west of the United States there existed a multitude of free lands which made it possible for the proletariat "to escape to freedom" from capitalism. This fact, according to Werner Sombart's opinion, has arrested the development of class consciousness in the North American wage laborers and has, consequently, slowed down the growth of Socialism.

Plekhanov observed, however, that this latter "fact" was becoming less and less operative:

The expanse of free lands has diminished ever more with the course of time, whereas the colossal development of capitalism has aggravated the contradictions which are peculiar to North American society. Hence the causes which have retarded the growth of Socialism in the United States have more and more

been removed or have even been transformed into their very opposites. Werner Sombart thinks that in the not very distant future, Socialism will bloom exuberantly in North America.

Plekhanov drew the argument to a close by remarking that "all of this" was "very interesting" and he again "urgently" advised his readers "to become acquainted with Sombart's new book, supplementing it by reading Karl Kautsky's articles."

The Russian's final comments were: "Sombart promises to show in one of his future investigations that in 'the objective sense,' nowhere in the world is the worker subjected to such strong exploitation by the capitalist as in the United States." Plekhanov seized upon this announcement eagerly because the forthcoming study promised to "supply new material" to confirm the Marxian credo that "to the extent of the development of capitalist society, the position of the proletariat *grows relatively worse*" notwithstanding the improvement of its material situation "in the *absolute* sense."

In this analysis of the prospects of Socialism in the United States, several points stand out. In the first place, in developing the argument, Plekhanov manifestly followed Sombart (and, for that matter, Kautsky) quite closely.<sup>15</sup> He was essentially unoriginal in his approach and added little fresh matter to the substance of what Sombart had written. Plekhanov disputed hardly any of the latter's findings although there were certain disagreements with Kautsky's reasoning—but not about matters which concern us directly.<sup>16</sup> The Russian Social-Democrat apparently subscribed fully to Sombart's flat assertion concerning the degree of "objective" exploitation of the American workers by the capitalist class. This he took to be in accord with strict Marxism.

At the same time, however, and notwithstanding Plekhanov's firm belief that the position of the American proletariat was bound (in narrow economic terms) eventually to worsen, this Russian revolutionary did not minimize the mitigating factors within the American capitalist environment which Sombart had pointed out. Even though—as Sombart put it—the United States was "Canaan,

<sup>15</sup>Plekhanov was familiar with one of the main sources for the material in Sombart's book: Emile Levasseur's two volume study, *L'Ouvrier Américain*, Paris, 1898. Whereas, as we have already seen, Plekhanov had high intellectual regard for Sombart, this was not so in the case of the Frenchman whom he disdained as an "eclectic." Levasseur knew the United States at first hand. His work has been translated into English as *The American Workman*, Baltimore, 1900.

<sup>16</sup>*Sochineniya*, vol. XVI, p. 199 and *Die Neue Zeit*, Feb. 14, 1906, pp. 676-683.

the promised land for capitalism,"<sup>17</sup> there were the sober realities of a long-time social fluidity, entrenched democratic political institutions, and the old-time *possibility* of a "flight to freedom" and the fresh lands of the West by the exploited urban worker. The cognizance of the frontier's "significance" and Turner's "safety-valve" operating even as late as 1906 is remarkable.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond this we must stress Plekhanov's silence in regard to the relation of the future revolution to existing democratic political institutions. It can safely be inferred that Plekhanov was still convinced of the vitality of legal means of struggle for Socialism in America. Finally, even within Plekhanov's (and Sombart's) objective schematizations, Socialism in the United States was relegated at least to "the next generation, in all probability."<sup>19</sup> This fits in very well with the curiously ambiguous attitude which we have already encountered in the Appeal to the Russian workers in America a score of years before. For if the ground was not yet prepared for American Socialism in the first decade of the twentieth century, as Sombart asserted, how could it be maintained from a Plekhanovite point of view that the United States had been objectively ripe for Socialism twenty years earlier?

The tragic fact from Plekhanov's Marxian standpoint was that for various reasons American Socialism was not to evolve in so straightforward a direction as was envisioned. For one thing, the American worker's position continued to improve absolutely (if perhaps not relatively). Added to this was an increasing skepticism and disillusionment with Socialist developments in post-revolutionary Russia. No doubt, these two factors together were greatly instrumental in having an inhibiting effect in the long run upon the genuine growth of American radical movements.

American Socialism, so far as we can judge now, was actually reaching its high-water mark in those very pre-war years in which Plekhanov showed his keenest interest in the movement. After

<sup>17</sup>Sombart, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>Elsewhere Plekhanov mentions two other reasons for the tardiness of American Socialist development: the merely anti-monopoly (and not genuinely revolutionary) ideology of the Granger and Populist farmers with whom the American workers—theoretically, the revolution-bearing class—were allied from time to time; and the narrowly sectarian outlook of the German and other European Social-Democrats who had settled in America. See *Sochineniya*, vol. XII, p. 296 and vol. XIX, p. 181. For the "safety-valve" theory, see F. J. Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier*, New York, 1920.

<sup>19</sup>Sombart, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

1912, an ebb set in from which there was never a sustained recovery even in those years, gloomy indeed for American capitalism, the era of the great depression of 1929 and after.

Finally, Plekhanov's failure to appreciate the importance of the various indigenous and pragmatically American movements of protest against the evils of unrestrained capitalism may be taken for a sign of his European Marxian narrowness of outlook.

Over a decade later, in the midst of World War and Revolution, Plekhanov once again recurred to the theme of American Socialism—in an oblique but significant manner. In June, 1917, he wrote in his publication, *Edinstvo*, that an impoverished country like Russia suffered greater economic harm from the war than did England, France, Germany, or the United States.<sup>20</sup> He was much impressed by the strength of American capitalism and the "incomparable practical ability" of the Americans.<sup>21</sup> These fragmentary statements were amplified in an "Open Letter to the Workers of Petrograd," written from a sickbed shortly after the Bolshevik seizure of power. Plekhanov's tone was very pessimistic about the prospects of any contemporary revolution in Europe achieving success. The veteran Marxian leader warned the workers of the northern capital against the great pitfalls that lay ahead if they continued to align themselves with Lenin's faction. While the whole of the Letter merits careful consideration, one section is of special interest to us:

The Germans will not be able to finish what was begun by the Russians. Neither the French, the English, *nor the inhabitants of the United States* [my italics, D. H.] will be able to finish it. By having seized political power inopportunely, the Russian proletariat will not complete a social revolution but will only raise up a civil war, which, in the end, will force it to retreat far back from the positions won in February and March of the present year.<sup>22</sup>

On such a note of disillusionment, we may round out this survey of Plekhanov's attitudes towards Socialism and its possibilities in the United States. In the beginning there was a buoyant faith in the organic potentialities of the American workers' movement and in what it could accomplish. But almost from the start, the question of the eminently necessary and desirable Socialist revolution in America was complicated by the notion that the American movement was perhaps to be a kind of adjunct to the Russian one (led

<sup>20</sup>G. V. Plekhanov, *God na rodine*, J. Povolovsky, ed., Paris, 1921, vol. I, p. 209.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 53.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 247. A large section of this letter is translated in David Shub's *Lenin*, 1948, p. 263.

by the émigrés in Western Europe). Later on, we discover a frank acknowledgement of the weakness of the American Socialist movement and an excellent, if derivative, appraisal of the reasons as to why it was so weak.

In the final analysis, we may assert that theoretically, and fundamentally, because the United States was an advanced capitalist country with the concomitant economic and social dislocations diagnosed by the Marxists, Plekhanov no doubt believed that the New World republic would *ultimately* be faced with the prospects of a violent Socialist revolution. Whether the civil liberties of bourgeois society were, however, to be jettisoned by the revolution, remains unclear. Menshevik instability between theory and practice in regard to the value of "bourgeois" civil liberties is apparent in Plekhanov's presentations. It would seem that practically, within Plekhanov's lifetime and probably for an indefinite period thereafter, legal and parliamentary means of struggle were favored. The time was deemed not to be ripe for such a violent transition to the new social order as "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" slogan meant.



## N. F. Fedorov\*

BY NICHOLAS BERDYAEV

NIKOLAI Fedorovich Fedorov, the modest librarian of the Rumyantsev Museum, was a man of genius. He was an eccentric person endowed with great natural talent. He did not publish a single book in his life time, rejecting the very idea of publishing and selling one's works, and was consequently not widely known. N. Fedorov was Russian to the core, one who epitomized the particularities of Russian thought and Russian soul-searching. During his life a natural, light ascetism and a peculiar righteousness were characteristic of him.

The most notable Russians of his time spoke enthusiastically of Nikolai Fedorov and admired his personality. Dostoevsky, who did not know him personally, wrote of his "idea" as follows: "In essence, I am in perfect agreement with these thoughts. I would accept them as my own." Vladimir Soloviev, on whom Fedorov had a great and as yet undisclosed influence, wrote to him: "I read your manuscript avidly and with spiritual delight . . . I accept your project [Fedorov's idea of resurrecting the dead] unconditionally and without hesitation . . . *Your project is the first movement forward of the human spirit on the path to Christ.* For my part, I can only acknowledge you as my teacher and spiritual father." Fet informed Fedorov what Lev Tolstoy said of him: "*I am proud to be the contemporary of such a man.*" Fet added the following opinion of his own: "I do not know a man that knows you who would not have expressed himself about you in just the same way." Lev Tolstoy admired the moral character of Fedorov and condoned the very sharp statements the latter made about him. Fedorov's friend V. A. Kozhevnikov, who has written a book about him,<sup>1</sup> declared: "He was a sage and a righteous man, and those closer to him would add: he was one of those righteous men who make the world a better place in which to live."

The essential idea of Nikolai Fedorov was the purely Russian

\*This is a translation of a part of Berdyaev's article entitled "Three Jubilees" (Leo Tolstoy, H. Ibsen, and N. F. Fedorov) published in the Russian periodical *Put'* in Paris, in 1928. In Harbin admirers and followers of N. F. Fedorov (1828-1903) published his *Philosophy of the Common Work* (*Filosofiya obshchego dela*) in 3 parts, in 1928-30 [Ed.].

<sup>1</sup>N. F. Fedorov: *Opyt izlozheniya ego ucheniya*, Moscow, 1908.

idea of the responsibility of everyone for everyone, the idea of active participation of man in the cause of general salvation and resurrection. Fedorov was terribly distressed by the discord and lack of fraternal relations among people. He was in no sense a writer, nor was he a philosopher in the usual sense of the word. Never did he strive for what is called "cultural creation," but sought "work"—the "work of general salvation."

Fedorov is the most extreme antipode of individualism. He is a collectivist of a special type. He has no interest in the subjective world of the soul and loathes the romanticism of cultured people. Fedorov is a deadly enemy of capitalist society, as a non-familial, Godless, and anti-Christian society based on discord; and in this respect he is more radical than the Communist who, by comparison with Fedorov, appear bourgeois.

The doctrine of Fedorov is first and foremost a call to common toil, to its religious organization and regulation. He did not like the fraternity of scholars who divorced thought from life, and he exposes the sin of the intelligentsia's estrangement from the people. Theoretical philosophy and contemplative metaphysics are completely alien to him. His own philosophy is projective and active. Philosophy must not reflect the world passively, but actively transform and improve it. In this respect Fedorov has a formal similarity with Marx. Separating theoretical reasoning from what is practical is the sinful betrayal of thought. Therefore, he calls his philosophy the "Philosophy of the Common Work." Only that philosophy is genuine and justified which has as its basis solicitude for the grief and death of people. Fedorov himself possessed this solicitude to the highest degree, and hence he stands on an unusual spiritual level.

For Nikolai Fedorov the one and ultimate evil is death. Every evil derives from death and leads to death. The world-wide struggle against death is the problem confronting mankind. Fedorov sharply criticizes as a religion of death the doctrine of progress. Progress builds its life on the decomposed bones of ancestors laid to rest. It is based on the forgetfulness of duty with regard to the deceased. It legalizes the devouring of the preceding generation by the one which follows it. Progress is reconciled to death and is opposed to the idea of resurrection and the action of resurrecting the dead. The true vocation of man is the vocation of the *resurrector* of life.

In his conception of the world Fedorov combines in an original way conservative and revolutionary elements. He wants a radical

change of time from the future to the past, desiring victory over death-bearing time. A man must look after his ancestors as well as his progeny. He possesses an obligation not only towards his sons but also towards his fathers. A man is first of all a son, and Fedorov would like to disclose and to affirm the filiation of man. A man's son must hold in memory and must look after his deceased forebears. He cannot make his peace with death. Christianity is the religion of the Resurrection. And Fedorov speaks not only of Resurrection, but also of *resurrecting* the dead. Man is called upon to make active preparations for the general resurrection, and this also means that he is called upon to resurrect the dead. People must unite in the common work of resurrecting the dead.

Nikolai Fedorov is a bitter enemy of Monophysitic deviations in Christianity. For him not only is God active but also man. In this lies the meaning of the Christological dogma about God-Man. The division of heaven and earth is a distortion of Christianity. Christianity strives to transform the earth, to put in good order the life of the world, to introduce reason and consciousness into the elemental forces of nature, to subjugate death-bearing nature to the man-resurrector.

In the case of Fedorov, belief in the active vocation of man is connected with belief in reason, in science, in technology, in the possibility of the regulation of all nature. His thought has a cosmic sweep. In nature there rage irrational, elemental forces which lead to the triumph of death. Victory over death is victory over these irrational, elemental forces through control, through the purposeful activity of man. But for Fedorov regulation of elemental nature is not conquest and violence; it is not domination, but the fulfilment of a sacred duty towards the deceased, towards forefathers. It is fulfilled not only for the future, but also for the past—for the restoration of the ashes of ancestors.

The Fedorov idea of the regulation of nature differs radically from the idea of progressive civilization. Fedorov is first and foremost a Christian of the Greek Orthodox faith. Godless science and technology can sow only death. The novelty of Fedorov's idea, one which frightens so many people, lies in the fact that it affirmed the activity of man as incommensurably greater than that which humanism and progressivism believe in. Resurrection is an act not only of God's grace but also of human activity. A passive relationship to the elemental forces of nature and to death evoked by them is considered by Fedorov as the greatest sin.

Nikolai Fedorov was an original type of a Slavophile. He acknowl-

edged the great advantages of the East over the West, but least of all is he a partisan of the Eastern passivity of man. In the West man was more active, but this activity was false. It was expressed in Western progress, which legalizes death. According to Fedorov, Western civilization is based on citizenship and not on kinship. But citizens are prodigal sons who have forgotten about their fathers. He also treats comradeship, which is contrary to brotherhood, in a negative fashion. Brotherhood presupposes filiation, which is the fundamental category of Fedorov's thinking. The genuine society is kinship and brotherhood, one based on filiation. The Holy Trinity is the prototype of the genuine human society. The whole world must be organized on the pattern of the Divine Trinity, that of heavenly kinship.

The original social utopianism of Fedorov lay in the fact that he believed in the possibility of a patriarchal, related society based on ancestor worship. He underestimated the power of evil and discord in human society. He believed in the utopia of a Russian autocratic monarchy, which must be universal. The Russian Orthodox Tsar must rule the entire natural world and stand at the head of the resurrector-sons. This presupposes such a unity of faith in which there is little basis for believing.

Nikolai Fedorov was essentially an opponent of the state and civil society. Human society must be a family based on a common religious worship. He is the implacable foe of secularization. Everything must become sacred anew. Wars between peoples and also the class struggle must cease; the forces of mankind, united by religion, must turn to war against the elemental forces of nature and against death. The armies must be moved into the struggle against elemental meteorological phenomena, to bring about the conquest of the universe. But this presupposes the pacification of mankind, the victory over the evil will within mankind.

The "project" of Nikolai Fedorov, which Vladimir Soloviev accepted in its entirety, was the most audacious one in the whole history of Christianity: people must unite for the common work—the resurrecting of deceased ancestors. Up to this time Christianity believed in the Resurrection, but never dared to speak about resurrecting the dead, about man's activity in restoring the life of forefathers. Fedorov demanded that the entire life and culture of a people be transported to the cemetery, and thus closer to the paternal ashes. In addition to the church liturgy there must be an extra-church liturgy; all life must become an extra-church liturgy.

The very division into what is sacred and what is profane must be overcome; all must become sacred.

The originality of Fedorov lies in the fact that along with this he acknowledged the great significance of science, technology, and organized labor. He is inimical to a contemplatively romantic and mystical frame of mind. He desires a real, an almost material resurrection of the dead.

The first condition of the common work of resurrecting deceased ancestors is the moral unification of people, the cessation of discord and struggle, the disclosure of fraternal and filial love. This is the obligatory spiritual condition without which the "common work" is impossible. Spiritually and morally man must consider himself a resurrector. Man must be conscious of his obligation with respect to his forefathers, i.e. all deceased humanity. The moral consciousness of Fedorov is unusually lofty, and no one in the Christian world has yet risen above it. It is incommensurably loftier than that consciousness which holds Christianity to be the religion of personal salvation, that of "transcendent egoism." Each Christian must think about salvation, the restoration of life, and the resurrection of every one. He must think not only about the living but also about the dead, not only about himself and his children but also about all the sons of mankind.

For Fedorov, man is first of all a son, then a father and brother. And he proposes to affirm the worship of the "eternal childlikeness" in place of the immoral worship of the "eternal femininity," in the name of which, according to Fedorov, capitalism, luxury, and worldly pleasures are created. Masculine purity and a complete absence of decadence, which appeared among the following generation, are characteristic of Fedorov.

But further along comes the most problematical and provocative idea in Fedorov's doctrine about resurrecting the dead. According to Fedorov's doctrine, the resurrection of the dead is achieved not only through action accomplished by Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour, and not only by the spiritual and moral efforts of mankind and the love of human beings for the deceased, but also by the scientific, technical, and physical activity of people. By the joint efforts of religion and science, of priest and learned technician, the dead and buried must experience their resurrection. Fedorov even speaks about the physico-chemical experiments of resurrecting the dead, which produces an almost frightening impression.

Fedorov's belief in the power of science and technology is unlimited. But the realization of this power is possible only under



specific religious and spiritual conditions. Fedorov's world-outlook contained strong elements of naturalism and rationalism, which accorded with the traditional Russian Orthodoxy in it. He underestimated the power of the irrational forces in life and for him the irrational was always an elemental evil which must be overcome by regulation, i.e. by the rationalization of the life of the world.

We come now to the most grandiose and bewildering idea of Nikolai Fedorov. He had a completely original and unprecedented attitude towards apocalyptic prophecies, and his doctrine represents a totally new phenomenon in Russian apocalyptical consciousness and Russian apocalyptical expectations. Russian apocalypticism usually takes on passive forms. The Russian awaits the end of the world, the advent of Antichrist, and the final struggle of good versus evil. The Russian passively submits to the mystical concepts of the Apocalypse. There was such a passive apocalypticism in our Schism (*Raskol*); and K. Leontiev and Vladimir Soloviev experienced it towards the end of their lives. The end of the world approaches, all is disorganized, the reign of Antichrist draws near. Man has not the power to resist him. Fedorov takes a completely different attitude. He teaches that the apocalyptical prophecies are conditional, that they present merely a threat. If mankind does not unite for the common work of resurrecting deceased ancestors, the restoration of life of all mankind, then there will come the end of the world, the advent of Antichrist, the Last Judgment, and eternal destruction for many people. But if mankind lovingly unites for the common work and fulfills its duty with respect to deceased forefathers, if it does all it can for the cause of general salvation and resurrection, then there will be no end of the world, no Last Judgment, and no eternal destruction for anyone. This is a projective and active conception of the Apocalypse. It depends on man whether God's plan for the world will be successful.

Never before in the Christian world has there been expressed such an audacious and bewildering thought about the possibility of avoiding the Last Judgment and its irrevocable consequences by dint of the active participation of man. If that which Fedorov calls for is achieved, then there will be no end of the world. Mankind, with a transformed and definitively regulated nature, will move directly into the eternal life.

Fedorov discloses eschatological perspectives which had never before been expressed in the Christian world. Fedorov is a resolute anti-gnostic; for him everything is accomplished not by passive thinking and knowledge, but by active work. The apocalyptical

and eschatological consciousness is a call to work, to activity, to responsibility. If the end of the world approaches, then this very occurrence must also evoke the unprecedented activity of man, the united effort to avoid the fateful end and to direct the world to eternal life. In this idea there is unusual grandeur and loftiness, to the level of which no one has risen.

With Fedorov the Russian messianic idea takes on wholly new forms. He passionately believed in Russia and in the Russian people, and in its unique mission in the world. The "common work" must commence in Russia. Western Europe is absorbed too much by culture and progress. But culture and progress have betrayed the cause of resurrection. They follow the path of the legalization of death.

Nikolai Fedorov did not live to see the Russian catastrophe, in which the Russian messianic idea was so horribly perverted. Russian Communism is the antipode of the Fedorov idea, for it committed an outrage over the ashes of ancestors. In it there appeared not the resurrector but the avenger, and it is directed exclusively towards the future. Russian Communism, from the Fedorov viewpoint, is a religion of death. But in it there are traits bearing an apish similarity to Fedorov's "common work": the unification of people; regulation directed toward the general welfare and earthly salvation; anti-individualism; a negative attitude toward culture, toward the intelligentsia, and toward thought divorced from life; activism; and pragmatism.

Nikolai Fedorov is unusually characteristic of the Russian idea. An appraisal of him is still awaited. The weak side of Fedorov's doctrine is his failure to perceive the irrational freedom of evil in the world and his rationalistically-naturalistic optimism. This gives rise to Utopianism, so characteristic of Russian thinking. In fact, mysticism is less utopian.

Fedorov sees in death the source of evil, and in victory over death—the primary task of mankind. In this is his truth. But he underestimates the mystical meaning of the passage through death as the inner moment of life, i.e. the redemptive meaning of the Cross and of Golgotha.

We must welcome the interest in Nikolai Fedorov, the republication of his writings, and the development of his ideas. But in our epoch he also can be interpreted falsely. The greatness of Nikolai Fedorov lies first and foremost in his moral idea, in solicitude for the discord and grief of people, in the call for human activity, and in his craving for the general redemption and resurrection.

# Three Sojourners in the Acmeist Camp

Sergei Gorodetsky, Vladimir Narbut, Mikhail Zenkevich

BY LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY

IN the year 1907, a twenty-three-year-old student woke up one morning and, like Byron, found himself famous. That day a slim volume of verse entitled *Spring-Corn (Yar')* by as yet an unknown poet made its appearance and took the literary capital of Russia by storm. Soon its singing lines (so full of alliterations and reiterations that they are absolutely untranslatable) were on everybody's lips. Although they bore the unmistakable influence of the well-established poet Constantine Balmont, they revealed a fresh, almost boyish, approach to life. And the themes taken from Russian folk-lore and old Slavic mythology, though not profound, were so pleasantly popular that they appealed to the conservative and the liberal reader alike. Furthermore, the very language of the new poet, his choice of words and their juxtaposition, had such a fascinating, singing quality that his verse was easily remembered. It seemed that a new literary star was born. But it proved to be only a meteor.

The new poet was Sergei Mitrofanovich Gorodetsky, the son of cultured parents. His father was a literary historian of note, and his mother had been a friend of Turgenev. Born in St. Petersburg on January 17, 1884, he attended the public schools of the then Russian capital and of the city of Oryol, and later the University of St. Petersburg where he studied history and philology. He started publishing his verse in 1905 while still a student at the university where he had known Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely. And he was still a student when fame descended upon him.

Encouraged by the success of his first offering on the altar of the Muses, Gorodetsky published a second volume of verse entitled *Perun* (1907) (the Slavic pagan god of thunder) before the year was over. Similar in tone and themes with his first book, it contained also the following poem written in free verse and entitled "Yarila" (the old Slavic pagan equivalent of Dionysos), which is typical of the early work of Gorodetsky:

First to sharpen the ax-flint they bent,  
On the green they had gathered, unpent,  
They had gathered beneath the green tent.  
There where whitens a pale tree-trunk, naked,  
There where whitens a pale linden trunk.  
By the linden tree, by the young linden,  
The linden trunk  
White and naked.

At the fore, shaggy, lean, hoar of head,  
Moves the wizard, as old as his runes;  
He has lived over two thousand moons.  
And the ax he inhumed.  
On the far lakes he loomed  
Long ago.  
It is his: the first blow  
At the trunk.

And two priestesses in their tenth spring  
To the old one they bring.  
In their eyes  
Terror lies.  
Like the trunk their young bodies are bright;  
Their wan white  
Has she only, the tender young linden.

One he took, one he led,  
To the trunk roughly wed,  
A white bride.  
And the ax rose and hissed—  
And a voice was upraised  
And then died.  
Thus the first blow was dealt to the trunk.

Others followed him, others upraised  
The age-old bloody ax,  
That keen flint-bladed ax:  
The flesh once,  
The tree twice  
Fiercely cleaving.

And the trunk reddened fast  
And it took on a face.  
Lo,—this notch is a nose,  
This—an eye.  
The flesh once,  
The trunk twice—  
Till all red was the rise  
And the grass crimsoned deep.  
On the sod  
In the red stains there lies  
A new god.<sup>1</sup>

Such poetry became very popular and attracted many young talents, including Count Alexei Nikolaevich Tolstoy. This popularity was enhanced by the personality of Gorodetsky who exuded good fellowship. Although not handsome, he was attractive with his open light eyes, brown locks of curly hair, a singing voice, an engaging smile with a joke on his lips and a large, friendly, helping hand. He counted new friends by the scores and his enemies were often baffled by his candor. Even his frequent changes of allegiance, artistic as well as political, had something disarming about them.

In 1908, Gorodetsky published his third book of verse entitled *Wild Freedom*.<sup>2</sup> This was followed two years later by a collection of poems about Russia.<sup>3</sup> Gorodetsky wrote verse very easily, just as easily as he did everything including portrait painting. In these years, having abandoned Balmont, he worshipped at the shrine of Symbolism as represented by Vyacheslav Ivanov and Alexander Blok. And then he made the acquaintance of Nicholas Gumilyov, leader of the Acmeist school, and espoused Acmeism with all the ardor and enthusiasm of his changeable soul. Gorodetsky and Gumilyov became inseparable. They founded together the "Guild of Poets" in 1912, they defended the ideas of Acmeism together, they drank wine together and together they glorified the word. It was a strange friendship: Gumilyov—the knight in armor, the master of chiselled verse, and Gorodetsky—the fun-maker, the buffoon, the slovenly poet. In later years Gumilyov said: "In its essence our friendship is the friendship of a grown-up for a child.

<sup>1</sup>Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky in *Russian Poetry: An Anthology*, New York-London, 1928, pp. 153-154.

<sup>2</sup>*Dikaya Volya*, St. Petersburg, 1908; 2nd ed., 1910.

<sup>3</sup>*Rus'*, St. Petersburg, 1910.



I am the grown-up, the serious, the boring. And Gorodetsky lives as if he were playing tag. Probably what attracted us to each other was that we are so different."<sup>4</sup>

Gorodetsky gave himself to the new movement of Acmeism loyally and wholeheartedly. The worshipper of musicality now became the mason and the builder of architecturally perfect words. Writing in 1913, he said: "The freeing of the word of its meaning, as is done by musicians, is a process of lightening it, of dematerialization. And in reverse: the adjunction of meaning to the word gives it weight; it is a process of incarnation, of materialization. Heavy words (and all our common words are proud of their weight) demand for their adjunction precise laws, such as do stones when they are joined in the construction of a building."<sup>5</sup> To this he added: "Art knows only the square, only the circle. Art is solidity." In the same year he published his fifth book of poetry under the title *The Willow (Iva)* and followed it a year later with a collection of octaves entitled *The Flowering Staff (Tsvetushchyi Posokh)*. With this work, Gorodetsky definitely took his place among the Acmeist poets. In a dedication to his wife (whom he called "The Nymph"), which prefaced this collection, Gorodetsky wrote:

Acmeism exists not only as a literary theory, which was worked out by a common experience of a group of poets and which has already so obviously benefited our art, but also as a philosophy which affirms categorically the primary importance as well as the principal meaning for us, humans, of this earthly world of ours and which considers as its first commandment a creative attitude toward this world. . . . As an acmeist I am here, within the limits of my powers, simple, straightforward and honest in the presentation of relations between the object and the word, relations which have been obscured by the symbolists and which by nature are extremely brittle. I did not want to use at all any exaggerations, any extensive interpretations or skyscraping elucidations. Nevertheless, the world did not lose its beautiful complexity, did not become flattened. And the dark corners of the soul opened up more than before in the light of our ordinary yet divine sun.<sup>6</sup>

And he proceeded to show what he meant in verse like this:

I love the water so like woman,  
The fire alive as youth in June,  
The haughty nature of the stones  
And earth with tender grass bestrewn.

<sup>4</sup>G. Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya Zimy*, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup>Sergei Gorodetsky, "Kamen O. Mandelshtama," *Rech*, No. 162, June 30, 1913.

<sup>6</sup>*Tsvetushchyi Posokh*, pp. 15, 16, 17.

I love the dark debauché of spaces,  
The triumph of the stars on wings,  
But our air, transparent, earthly,  
I love beyond all other things.<sup>7</sup>

In another poem dedicated to Gumilyov, he affirmed his Acmeism:

The world is vast and full of sound,  
More than a rainbow has it hues.  
And hence it was assigned to Adam,  
Creator, who old things renews.

To name, to learn, to tear the raiments  
From idle myths and ancient mists—  
Such is the first great deed. A new one—  
Is to extol all that exists.

When reviewing this book, Gumilyov wrote:

"'Oh, Lord, how much there is beauty  
In Your star-studded world!'

exclaims Sergei Gorodetsky, but as an Acmeist he expresses not the beautiful itself, but only his impression of it. . . . However, *The Flowering Staff* has many defects, perhaps more than are permitted a book in our days written by a poet with a name. Sergei Gorodetsky more often tells than presents."<sup>8</sup>

Such criticism did not break the friendship between Gumilyov and Gorodetsky. What did so was the First World War and the changeable Gorodetsky's abandonment of Acmeism and his alignment with the peasant poets, Klyuev and Yessenin. When the war broke out in 1914, Gorodetsky became a "jingo patriot." In an article entitled "Love for the Germans" he expressed his astonishment at the Russians' soft attitude toward the wounded prisoners and he appealed to his readers to abandon the language of love in dealing with the Germans.

The Germans understand only the language of guns. This is the language in which one should converse with them at present, the only language. And the more energetic the fire of guns, the more understandable it will be for the Germans. . . . We must turn all our Slavic love, all our softness on to guns

<sup>7</sup>This and all the following translations are by the author.

<sup>8</sup>N. S. Gumilyov, "Pisma o russkoi poezii," *Apollon*, No. 5, May 1914, pp. 35, 36.

and to everything that can beat the Germans and not spend our feelings on anything else. . . . To beat the Germans as hard as possible—such should be the watchword of the specific love for the Germans for those who are subject to it. To love the German must mean to beat him.<sup>9</sup>

Ultra-patriotic themes were now also the subject of Gorodetsky's poetry. He began to collaborate in the reactionary and jingoist press and in his next collection of verse *The Year Nineteen Fourteen*,<sup>10</sup> he glorified Emperor Nicholas II "on bended knees" (quite a feat for a former progressive liberal) and ended his poem with a paraphrase of the words of the then Russian national anthem "God Save the Tsar."<sup>11</sup> He also espoused the Slavophile claims for Constantinople, the ancient Tsargrad, and exclaimed:

You will be ours, you will be ours  
In this the most enchanting war!

Reviewing this book in *Apollo*, Georgi Ivanov wrote:

*The Year Nineteen Fourteen* by Sergei Gorodetsky produced on us the effect of a phantom: clear type, expensive paper, a pretty cover with the name of a well-known poet on it, but as for poetry, there is none. There are a few workable stanzas in a heap of negligently rhymed patriotic exercises. . . . It seems that Gorodetsky has lost on his way all the gifts with which he was endowed: thus instead of a genuine feeling for the Russian language we find here a crude stylization in a pseudo-Russian manner. . . . The real knowledge of the images of people's poetry and a real love for them have been replaced by a sugary popularism. On the other hand, Gorodetsky's innate shortcomings blossomed out into an inordinate flower: the carelessness in the choice of words, the triviality of themes and an unintelligent pathos have been developed to the extreme in *The Year Nineteen Fourteen*.<sup>12</sup>

In 1916 Gorodetsky became war correspondent for the Moscow daily *The Russian Word* (*Russkoe Slovo*) and was sent to the Caucasus to cover the operations on the Turkish front. It was there that he witnessed the two revolutions of 1917. Remaining in South Russia, he joined the anti-Bolshevik movement and worked for the propaganda office of General Denikin. After he was captured by the Reds, he made a complete turnabout and "in the spring of 1920 appeared in Petrograd with a brand new Communist Party membership ticket in his pocket."<sup>13</sup> He resumed his poetic activity, but

<sup>9</sup>Sergei Gorodetsky, "Lyubov k nemtsam," *Golos Zhizni*, No. 2, 1914, pp. 12-14.

<sup>10</sup>*Chetyrnadtsaty god*, Petrograd, 1915.

<sup>11</sup>Orest Tsekhovitsker, *Literatura i mirovaya voyna*, Moscow, 1938, p. 115.

<sup>12</sup>Georgi Ivanov, "O novykh stikhakh," *Apollon*, No. 3, 1915, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup>Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya*, p. 85.

where formerly one could read the names of Slavic pagan deities, of Emperor Nicholas II, of the ancient Tsargrad, now stood those of Lenin, of the October Revolution, and of the Third International. In 1921 he published his twelfth book of verse, *The Scythe*<sup>14</sup> followed two years later by one entitled *The Breaking of the World*.<sup>15</sup> Writing about this period in Gorodetsky's life, the Soviet critic V. I. Boichevsky said: "The epoch of the October Revolution, which presented squarely the problem of a new society, forced Gorodetsky to dedicate his powers to the struggle of the masses for their future. It must be noted, however, that his collections of verse, *The Scythe* and *The Breaking of the World*, do not represent any poetical value."<sup>16</sup> To this may be added the opinion of another Soviet literary critic, A. Selivanovsky, who wrote: "In his post-revolutionary verse S. Gorodetsky did not produce anything even approximating the standard which he had set before 1917."<sup>17</sup>

In 1926 Gorodetsky settled in Moscow, where he edited a theatrical journal and collaborated in Soviet periodicals. The following year he was elected president of the Union of Soviet Writers.<sup>18</sup> His change from an Acmeist to a Soviet writer was now complete.

In 1929 Gorodetsky published his last collection of selected verse entitled *The Edge: Lyrics*.<sup>19</sup> After this he wrote "principally for the mass-reader (propaganda verse, plays, prose) and for children."<sup>20</sup> So ended the poetical career of Sergei Gorodetsky, co-founder of Acmeism, who worshipped at many shrines and whose chief contribution to Russian poetry is "the poetic restoration of Russian paganism and a few lyrics carrying the dancing lilt of the folk-song."<sup>21</sup> Perhaps Gorodetsky's greatest trouble was that everything he did came to him so easily. In addition to poetry he wrote short stories, novels, plays, and translated the works of Knut Hamsun, Gerhart Hauptmann, and Guy de Maupassant. His enthusiasm and versatility often covered his lack of depth and so misled many contemporaries into believing that he was a real poet. His place in the Acmeist movement, therefore, is more that of a theorist and prop-

<sup>14</sup>*Serp*, Petersburg, 1921.

<sup>15</sup>*Mirolom*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923.

<sup>16</sup>*Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, II, 641.

<sup>17</sup>A. Selivanovsky, *Ocherki po istorii Russkoi Sovetskoi poezii*, Moscow, 1936, p. 62.

<sup>18</sup>B. Kozmin, *Pisateli sovetskoi epokhi*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1928, p. 96.

<sup>19</sup>*Gran': Lirika, 1918-1928*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929.

<sup>20</sup>*Literaturnaya*, II, 641.

<sup>21</sup>Deutsch and Yarmolinsky, *Russian Poetry*, p. 238.

agandist than of a practical exponent of the new poetical ideas in his actual writings.

In the autumn of 1910 there appeared in St. Petersburg book stores a small collection of verse under the nondescript title *Poems* (*Stikhi*) and signed by an unknown name: V. Narbut. It received little attention at first, but when the two leading literary reviews—*Apollo* of St. Petersburg and *The Russian Thought* (*Russkaya Mysl'*) of Moscow—gave it favorable reviews, the literati and the general reading public became interested. Wrote Valery Bryusov in *The Russian Thought*:

Mr. Narbut differs advantageously from many other beginning poets by the realism of his poems. He has the knowledge and the desire to look at the world through his own eyes and not through somebody else's prism. A number of sharp observations on the different aspects of Russian nature are scattered through his book.<sup>22</sup>

This was echoed by Nicholas Gumilyov who wrote a little more critically in *Apollo*:

Not a bad impression is produced by the book of verse by Narbut. It contains technical methods which enchant the reader, although there are also such which leave him cold; it has sharp characterizations, although it also has false ones; it has an atmosphere of intimacy, although at times marred by banality. But how is it possible not to forgive slips in the presence of real achievement?<sup>23</sup>

Such accolade from two recognized masters inflamed the young author to leave his provincial habitat on a country estate and to come to St. Petersburg where he became immediately engaged in a drunken brawl, was arrested, tried and fined for "assault and battery on a police officer during the performance of his duty."<sup>24</sup> Thus began the literary career of Vladimir Ivanovich Narbut. He was born in 1888 on a family estate Narbutovka in the province of Chernigov in the Ukraine, the second son of a landowner. His elder brother was the well-known painter and etcher, Yegor Narbut. He received his secondary education in the provincial town of Glukhov and later studied at the University of St. Petersburg. He made his literary debut in the students' journal *Gaudeamus*, where he published his first verses, but these passed unnoticed. After his student days he

<sup>22</sup>Valery Bryusov, "Novye sborniki stikhov," *Russkaya Mysl'*, February 1911, p. 232.

<sup>23</sup>N. Gumilyov, "Pisma o russkoi poezii," *Apollon*, No. 6, 1911, p. 75.

<sup>24</sup>Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya*, p. 137.



retired to his estate in the province of Saratov wherefrom he was called to St. Petersburg by the success of his first book of verse. Here he joined the "Guild of Poets" and became an Acmeist. His verses began to appear in leading literary journals. They had a fresh and uninhibited approach, and some of them, as the following, possess a definite musical lilt:

She isn't a beauty. And flattened  
Somewhat is her nose, and her eyes,  
Which gaze into distance with sorrow,  
Are tearful in sudden surprise.

Why does she shed tears? That's her secret.  
And probably no one will know  
What sorrow—so holy? so earthly?—  
Maternally fondles her so.

She's taciturn. And—some may think it—  
She's also forbidding and proud.  
But when the new moon lifts its crescent  
From under the pond's misty shroud

The people's opinion is altered:  
She runs down the winding wet path  
In order to wander in shadows  
Inviting some beggarly wrath.

She roams, meanwhile sighing and crying,  
Beneath the dark willows in sleep  
Until the sunrise's red flood-light  
Envelops her house in a sweep.

Again on the commonplace terrace  
She sits in her silence and gloom,—  
A dream that went back where it came from,  
But left the soul cold as a tomb.<sup>25</sup>

However, in most of his new poetry, Narbut's realism was vulgar and often unprintable. It had a physiological approach often verging on the clinical. "Words heavy as boulders, awkward, massive; a

<sup>25</sup>V. Narbut, "Stikhotvoreniya," *Apollon*, No. 3, 1913, pp. 33-34.

verse verging on prose; the inclusion in the vocabulary of common household expressions; the satisfaction with a fleshy world, limited to sensual impressions—such are the characteristics of the early poetry of Narbut.”<sup>26</sup> Following the lead of the Acmeists away from the estheticization of the world, he reached the limit in the estheticization of ugliness. He came to St. Petersburg not only to engage in drunken brawls and to make literary acquaintances; he came to astound and shock St. Petersburg and Russian literature. And he did it with the publication of a new collection of verse entitled *Hallelujah*.<sup>27</sup>

Narbut published it at his own expense and had some difficulty in having it printed. He wanted it set in Church-Slavonic type, but the printing office of the Holy Synod, which alone in St. Petersburg possessed such type, refused the commission “because of the worldly content of the book.”<sup>28</sup> It was “worldly” indeed, because half of the words were unprintable. Narbut had to purchase the type and entrust a non-religious printing house with the work. Special pale-blue paper was ordered from Paris and finally the *chef-d’oeuvre* appeared. The initial letters of the text were printed in red as in religious works and the book contained a portrait of the author with a chrysanthemum in his lapel and accompanied by a flowery autograph. Two days later the book was confiscated by the authorities for containing blasphemy and pornography and later the whole edition was burned by court order. No reviews of it appeared at the time, of course. Only Bryusov commented on it briefly in *The Russian Thought*:

The booklet of Mr. Narbut, printed in Church-Slavonic type, contains a number of poems in which the desire to maintain a “Russian” style leads the poet to the assiduous use of words usually avoided in print. One of the poems begins with “He fires away rollickingly on the accordion” and this line could serve as an epigraph to the whole little collection.<sup>29</sup>

And only a post-revolutionary critic had something fairly good to say about it: “Love for heavy, ponderous, colorful and picturesque words manifested itself especially in the collection *Hallelujah* by Vladimir Narbut, who digs out characteristic words from the rich vocabulary of local slang and these words smell of dill and tar of the Ukraine.”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, p. 63.

<sup>27</sup>*Allilluya*, St. Petersburg, 1912; 2nd ed., Moscow, 1921.

<sup>28</sup>Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya*, p. 138.

<sup>29</sup>Bryusov, “Segodnyashnii den russkoi poezii,” *Russkaya Mysl'*, July, 1912, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup>V. Lvov-Rogachevsky, *Noveishaya Russkaya literatura*, Moscow, 1927, p. 301.

In the same year that saw the fiasco of Narbut's *Hallelujah*, the first book of another young poet made its appearance. It was called *The Pagan Purple* and signed: M. Zenkevich.<sup>31</sup> It was published by the "Guild of Poets." Reviewing it in *Apollo*, Gumilyov wrote:

Zenkevich is a free huntsman who does not want to know anything but the earth. . . . On the other hand where the demands of composition force him to deal with eternity and God, he feels out of place and always suspects them of some kind of injustice. . . . He is completely satisfied with the earth, but we have no heart to reproach him for this limitation, because the earth is, indeed, kind to him and opens up to him fully and intimately.<sup>32</sup>

But Bryusov was more critical when he wrote in *The Russian Thought*:

One would like to welcome a young poet who is trying to introduce into the field of poetry scientific terms and to solve by artistic methods those questions which until now are considered to be the domain of rational research. But in order that such creative output should have a meaning, it is necessary that it should not be composed merely of *repetitions* of scientific data, but should give something of its own, something new. Fully armed with knowledge, the poet must indicate by the force of his creative intuitions ways forward, must give a new synthesis for things beyond the limits where the scientist must stop. But all this is beyond the powers of Mr. Zenkevich who is generally satisfied by a re-telling of well-known information about prediluvian monsters, about metals, etc. His language is also still raw and he loves too much the noise of loud words, thinking, perhaps, that they express better the blind forces of nature. . . . Nevertheless, this part of Mr. Zenkevich's book remains the more interesting one, because in it he attempts to bring something new into Russian poetry. In verses dealing with the contemporary scene he remains unconventional, at times interesting, but many of them are far-fetched and lack the easy flight of genuine poetry.<sup>33</sup>

Mikhail Alexandrovich Zenkevich was born on May 21, 1888, in the township Nikolaevsky Gorodok in the province of Saratov, the son of a teacher in an agricultural school. After completing his secondary education in Saratov he attended the law school of the University of St. Petersburg and, after graduation, spent two years at the Universities of Berlin and Vienna, where he studied philosophy. His first published verse appeared in *Apollo* in 1910<sup>34</sup> and attracted Gumilyov's attention. Two years later he joined the "Guild of Poets" and became an Acmeist.

Like Narbut, Zenkevich loved heavy, ponderous, colorful and

<sup>31</sup>*Dikaya Porfira*, St. Petersburg, 1912.

<sup>32</sup>Gumilyov, "Pisma," *Apollon*, Nos. 3-4, 1912, pp. 100-101.

<sup>33</sup>Bryusov, "Segodnyashnii," pp. 22-23.

<sup>34</sup>"Stikhi," *Apollon*, No. 9, 1910, p. 8.

picturesque words. And like Narbut he revelled in physiological subjects which were often "vulgarly naturalistic," such as "The Impaled" (1912), "The Steer in the Slaughter House" (1913), "Death of an Elk" (1913), "They Kill Hogs" (1915). He also glorified barbarism. Thus in a poem entitled "Commodus" (1910), he makes a hero of the degenerate son of the humane and wise Emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius, and while characterizing him in a manner purposely repugnant to the average person, he actually glorifies him for his base taste:

You're heedless of your forebears' glory,  
With ruffian's greatness you bespeak;  
You loved—a groom—the dung of stables,  
A butcher—slaughter house's reek.

On the other hand, Zenkevich was an original innovator, being the first to write so-called "scientific poetry," i.e., he wanted to abolish the existing break between the language of science and that of creative artistic thinking, when "in the descriptions of the earth's crust and of geological transformations he takes words from texts on natural science, words in which, it seems, has been solidified 'the iron flesh of the earth.'"<sup>35</sup> In this type of poetry Zenkevich reveals "a preciseness of epithets, a concentration of attention on bulky objects and an emphasis on the active elements of the landscape."<sup>36</sup>

Comparing Narbut and Zenkevich, Gumilyov wrote:

M. Zenkevich, and even more so Vladimir Narbut, developed a hatred not only for beautiful words devoid of content, but for all beautiful words and not only for conventional elegance, but for elegance as a whole. Their attention has been drawn to everything that is genuinely abject, to slime, to dirt and to soot. But where Zenkevich softens the shameless reality of his images by the mist of remote times and distant lands, Vladimir Narbut remains consistent to the end, although, perhaps, not without mischief.<sup>37</sup>

During the first World War, both Narbut and Zenkevich served in the armed forces of Russia. After its end, Zenkevich joined the revived "Guild of Poets" in Petrograd and contributed to its collections a number of poems among which the most remarkable was "Death of an Aviator," dated 1917, and written in his usual ultra-

<sup>35</sup>Lvov-Rogachevsky, *Noveishaya*, p. 301.

<sup>36</sup>Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup>Gumilyov, "Pisma," quoted in Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, p. 63.

realistic style.<sup>38</sup> In 1918 he published his second collection of verse,<sup>39</sup> in which he revealed a new facet of himself. As the Soviet critic G. Vasyutinsky wrote:

The war and revolution changed sharply Zenkevich's attitude toward reality. While painting the picture of men's perdition in the convulsion of the bloody struggle of war, Zenkevich hopes that this catastrophe is only a plowed field "for the luminous harvest of the future." Following this destructive storm he appeals for creation, for the forging of new life, because "we must not be the slaves of time and space, but its masters."<sup>40</sup>

Later he joined the ranks of Soviet writers, although according to all available information he did not become a member of the Communist Party. After publishing two more books of verse and translations from the French and German,<sup>41</sup> he issued a collection of selected verse in 1933.<sup>42</sup> It contains a poem in free verse, dated 1926, which is remarkable not only because it is a good poem, but also because it is so typically Acmeist in the true Gumilyov tradition:

Breaking away from a lively conversation,  
Putting out a half-smoked cigarette,  
Leaving unfinished a glass of tea  
And a saucer of jam in which wasps are bathing,  
Bidding good-by to no one, unnoticed  
To rise and to leave the enclosed porch,  
Stirring the first fallen leaves of autumn.  
Past flower beds, over which roam death-head moths,  
To go into the field dusted by a purple thunder storm,  
Which is calling with the ecstatic sobs of crickets,  
Broken at times by the whistlings of quail  
As tranquil as the beats of a night watchman,  
Straight to where by a narrow golden ribbon  
The fusion of earth and sky is marked.  
And to dissolve in the dusk without hearing  
Someone's casually dropped remark  
Without regret: "He is no more . . ."

<sup>38</sup>"Smert Aviatora," *Tsekh Poetov*, II-III, Petersburg-Berlin, N.D., pp. 29-30.

<sup>39</sup>*Chetyr'nadtsat' stikhotoverenii*, Petersburg, 1918.

<sup>40</sup>*Literaturnaya*, IV (1930), 388.

<sup>41</sup>M. Zenkevich, *Lirika*, Petersburg, 1921; *Pod parokhodnym nosom*, Moscow, 1926; Victor Hugo, *1871*, Moscow, 1923; F. Freulingraht, *Vopreki vsemu*, Moscow, 1924.

<sup>42</sup>*Izbrannye Stikhi*, Moscow, 1933.



After reading this poem one can easily understand the verdict of Soviet criticism that Zenkevich's poetry is "weighted down to this day by the creative method of Acmeism."<sup>43</sup> But at the same time the next collection<sup>44</sup> contains among verses glorifying the mechanization of agriculture one addressed "To the poet" and dated 1935:

In words, in coal and in iron,  
                                   in smelting and weaving,  
 As well as in poetry,  
                                   the problem's the same:  
 Cloth, metal and consonance,  
                                   all of the highest quality,  
 All that is only the best—  
                                   is our country's ultimate aim.

This is a far cry, indeed, from Gumilyov's credo as expressed in the words of Theophile Gautier, "*l'oeuvre sort plus belle d'une forme au travail rebelle, vers, marbre, onyx, émail*," but may be considered as a Soviet adaptation of the canon of the French master. Notwithstanding such "adaptability" Zenkevich was not fully accepted as a Soviet writer although "he wanted sincerely to place his poetry at the service of the October Revolution."<sup>45</sup> And, in the opinion of another critic, his "'wolf's hunger for life' does in no way come near that socialist optimism, which characterizes Soviet poetry."<sup>46</sup>

As to Narbut, his desertion of Acmeism was more abrupt and more final than that of Zenkevich. After the Revolution and during the Civil War, he found himself in the Ukraine, where he espoused the Red cause and became a member of the Communist Party in 1919.<sup>47</sup> In that period he published a series of cheap propaganda verse,<sup>48</sup> in which the whole Marxist arsenal is displayed. Late in 1920, he moved to Moscow where he became the head of the publishing house ZIF, a branch of the State Publishing Concern. The next year he published another collection of verse entitled *The Soviet Land*<sup>49</sup> and issued a second edition of his notorious *Hallelujah*. After this he be-

<sup>43</sup>*Literaturnaya*, IV (1930), 338.

<sup>44</sup>*Nabor vysoty*, Moscow, 1937.

<sup>45</sup>*Literaturnaya*, IV (1930), 338.

<sup>46</sup>Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, p. 64.

<sup>47</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VII (1934), 588.

<sup>48</sup>V. Narbut, *Vereteno*, Kiev, 1919; *Stikhi o voine*, Poltava, 1920; *Krasnoarmeiskie stikhi*, Rostov-on-the-Don, 1920; *V ognennykh stolbakh*, Odessa, 1920; *Plot*, Odessa, 1920.

<sup>49</sup>*Sovetskaya Zemlya*, Moscow, 1921.

came completely absorbed in his publishing business. But in 1928 he was exposed and expelled from the Communist Party for having concealed that he had belonged to the nobility and that he was a former officer of the Imperial Russian Army. After a long silence he published more verses in 1933 which are undistinguishable from the general run of Soviet propaganda poetry. Narbut's poetical contribution was evaluated critically in Soviet publications. Wrote N. Zakharov-Mensky:

The fetishization of objects and an uncritical attitude toward reality, behind which was hidden an apology of the capitalistic régime, characteristic as it was of all Acmeist production, formed the main essence of all pre-revolutionary poems of Narbut. Although Narbut's post-revolutionary poems are dedicated to revolutionary themes, they are too abstract and far removed from the concrete class struggle of the proletariat.<sup>50</sup>

To this may be added the following opinion from the pen of Selivanovsky:

When Narbut began to write about the Proletarian Revolution, he had, naturally, to abandon his accustomed system of images since physiological naturalism was incapable of mirroring artistically the movement toward socialism. But while occupying new positions Narbut did not find living words about the Revolution. His poems devoted to revolutionary themes are very abstract. They lack live, real images. They are filled with conventional romanticized personages, they are abstractly humanitarian and abound in all sorts of religious and mythological similes. Thus in a poem about the October Revolution one finds the image of Christ and of Bethlehem. And in another poem a Bolshevik is surprisingly compared with Judas. . . . When Narbut returned to poetical work in 1933 after a long intermission, he discarded his abstract humanitarianism, but did not find a new socialist style for his poetry.<sup>51</sup>

And so Gorodetsky, Narbut, and Zenkevich, the three sojourners in the Acmeist camp, failed to establish themselves as socialist writers, when they put up their tents in the Soviet land and went to work to glorify the Proletarian Revolution and the building of Socialism under Communist direction. They failed to reveal in their poetry the principal characteristics of Acmeism—"the exacting chiselling of the verse, the carefulness in the choice of words, the constant checking of inspiration by reason",<sup>52</sup> and though disowning allegiance to Acmeism as a movement, they did not gain, judging from Soviet criticism, a recognized or honored place in Soviet poetry.

<sup>50</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VII (1934), 587.

<sup>51</sup>Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>52</sup>Bryusov, "Segodnyashnii," p. 22.

# The Rôle of the Proletariat in March, 1917

## Contradictions Within the Official Bolshevik Version

BY STANLEY W. PAGE

PART of the strength but also part of the weakness of a dogmatically oriented organization is the fact that it must never be wrong. The strength of dogmatic infallibility lies, of course, in the stability of its mass following, the weakness of it lies in its necessity to distort and rationalize, frequently to the point of absurdity, the contradictions between historical actuality and the doctrinal interpretation of what happened. A perfect example of this type of dialectical predicament can be seen in the official Bolshevik version of the rôle of the proletariat in the March revolution of 1917.

In 1938, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union authorized the publication of a short history of the Party. This was edited by a commission of the Central Committee, and, in 1939, the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow printed it in many languages, including English. Intended as such from the start, it has served as a sort of bible for members of Communist Parties throughout the world, and only recently, the satellite countries of the U.S.S.R. have been inundated by millions of copies. According to this official history:<sup>1</sup>

The (March) revolution was victorious because its vanguard was the working class which headed the movement of millions of peasants clad in soldiers' uniform demanding "peace, bread and liberty". It was the hegemony of the proletariat that determined the success of the revolution.

Then quoting Lenin, it says:<sup>2</sup>

The revolution was made by the proletariat. The proletariat displayed heroism; it shed its blood; it swept along with it the broadest masses of the toiling and poor population.

Having thus made their statement and proved it by Lenin (which

<sup>1</sup>*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, Moscow, 1939, p. 176; hereafter referred to as *History*.

<sup>2</sup>Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed.; Vol. XX, pp. 23-4; as cited in *History*, p. 176.

made it irrefutable) the writers of the gospel became troubled by an historical actuality embarrassing to the Bolsheviks. For if, as Lenin said, the proletariat had led the revolution (Lenin had predicted in 1905 that only by proletarian leadership could the monarchy be overthrown) then how was it that the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies, in March, 1917, was made up mainly of supporters of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties? How was it that the proletariat did not recognize the Bolsheviks as their leaders? The *History* proceeds to explain.<sup>3</sup>

While the Bolsheviks were directly leading the struggle of the masses in the streets, the compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, were seizing the seats in the Soviets and building up a majority there.

In short, while the Bolsheviks were doing all the honest revolutionary work in the streets, the Mensheviks and S.-R.s were treacherously putting one over on them. On the other hand, and if one reads on,<sup>4</sup>

This [the seizing of seats in the Soviet] was partly facilitated by the fact that the majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party were in prison or exile [Lenin was in exile abroad and Stalin and Sverdlov in banishment in Siberia] while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were freely promenading the streets of Petrograd.

In other words, or on second thought, it was the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries who were on the streets, the Bolsheviks being conspicuous by their absence. The implication contained in the first of the above two quotations is that the original Soviet was unrepresentative of the proletariat. However, the idea of the Soviet as the basis of working class rule is so ingrained in the entire tradition of the Soviet State that it was impossible for the "historians" to deny that it was representative. And, in fact, this point is freely admitted further down the page.<sup>5</sup> "The armed people—the workers and soldiers—sent their representatives to the Soviet as to an organ of power of the people."

But, if the Soviet was indeed representative of the people, that did not necessarily mean that the leadership within the Soviet was truly representative of the average deputy.

They [the armed people] thought and believed that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would carry out all the demands of the revolutionary

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup>*Id.*

<sup>5</sup>*Id.*

people. . . . But the unwarranted trustfulness of the workers and soldiers served them in evil stead. . . . As to the revolution and the revolutionary demands of the people, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks considered that the revolution was already over, and that the task now was to seal it and to pass to a "normal" coexistence side by side with the bourgeoisie. . . . On February 27 (March 12), 1917, the liberal members of the Fourth State Duma, as the result of a backstairs agreement with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, set up a Provisional Committee of the State Duma. . . . And so it was that the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet surrendered the power to the bourgeoisie.<sup>6</sup>

Thus far, it would appear, that the Soviet, though representative of the people, was deceived by the leaders of the compromising parties.

Yet, [the *History* goes on to say],<sup>7</sup> when the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies learned of this [the agreement concerning the Provisional Committee] its majority formally approved of the action of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, despite the protest of the Bolsheviks.

The majority, then, of the soldiers and workers approved of the "deceitful" action of their leaders and opposed the Bolsheviks. After sparring ineffectually with the problem for two pages, the Bolshevik dialecticians finally decided to face the situation boldly.

How, [they ask], is it to be explained that the majority in the Soviets at first consisted of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries?

How is it to be explained that the victorious workers and peasants *voluntarily* [italics by the Central Committee] surrendered power to the representatives of the bourgeoisie?<sup>8</sup>

Lenin,<sup>9</sup> [the *History* claims], explained it [thereby contradicting himself] by pointing out that millions of people, inexperienced in politics, had awakened and pressed forward to political activity. They were for the most part small owners, peasants, workers who had recently been peasants, people who stood midway between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Russia was at that time the most petty-bourgeois of all big European countries. And in this country "a gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook."<sup>10</sup>

It was this elemental petty-bourgeois wave that swept the petty-bourgeois Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties to the fore. Lenin pointed out that another reason was the change in the composition of the proletariat that

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>8</sup>*Id.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

<sup>10</sup>Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 49; as cited in *History*, p. 179.



had taken place during the war and the inadequate class consciousness and organization of the proletariat at the beginning of the revolution. During the war big changes had taken place in the proletariat itself. About 40% of the regular workers had been drafted into the army. Many small owners, artisans and shopkeepers, to whom proletarian psychology was alien, had gone to the factories in order to evade mobilization.

It was these petty-bourgeois sections of the workers that formed the soil which nourished the petty-bourgeois politicians—the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries. That is why large numbers of the people, inexperienced in politics, swept into the elemental petty-bourgeois vortex, and intoxicated with the first successes of the revolution, found themselves in its early months under the sway of the compromising parties and consented to surrender the state power to the bourgeoisie. . . .<sup>11</sup>

The cycle of contradiction is thus completed. From page 176 to page 179 of the official history of the Party, the revolution of March, 1917, has changed from a triumph of the proletariat to a victory of the petty-bourgeoisie disguised as proletarians. One official reason for this belatedly acknowledged victory of the petty-bourgeoisie:—40% of the real workers (those, that is, who would presumably have supported the Bolsheviks) were in the army doing their patriotic duty while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were evading the mobilization by taking war jobs. This explanation is in itself a final bit of contradiction. For during World War I, was it not good Bolshevism to be anti-war? If so, what were these regular, class conscious workers doing in the army? And why were the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, whom Lenin then so consistently attacked for “defensism,” acting in such fine unpatriotic Bolshevik manner? The answer to this puzzle, inadvertently concocted by the official historians, is, of course, the fact that by 1938 the Fatherland’s War had become good Bolshevism and it would not have seemed becoming to extoll draft evasion, even that of 1914, as good Bolshevik practice.

<sup>11</sup>*History*, p. 179.

## Book Reviews

DEUTSCHER, ISAAC. *Stalin, A Political Biography*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1949. 600 pp. \$5.00.

As this is the first life of Stalin since Souvarine's and Trotsky's, it contains a considerable amount of new material, not available or available only in fragmentary form, when the former works were written. This new material consists mainly of Stalin's own streamlining of his past in the biography of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, and in the successive volumes of Stalin's *Collected Works*, which have been appearing at the rate of about three a year since 1936.

In his proper zeal to use the new material, Deutscher has too frequently failed to collate it against the old. This defect is the more serious because Stalin has long been engaged in the retroactive editing of his party's and his own past, principally with a view to enlarging his own rôle in it and eliminating all traces of inconvenient truth, such as the evidence that any of the men he has purged were ever his superiors in anything, ever close to Lenin, or ever engaged in positive revolutionary activities. Deutscher is not unaware of this process, indeed, frequently alludes to it, but manifests no real determination to collate the successive versions, all highly contradictory and each in its turn "official," in order to extract from them the outlines of truth. This "archaeological" work is the more necessary because, as any one working with this peculiar material soon learns, the later a memoir or monograph, and the farther removed

from the actual events and the possible criticism of participants and eye-witnesses, the more distorted a given version is likely to be. A few instances are in order:

1. As Trotsky and Souvarine have demonstrated, a week after Lenin's death, Stalin pre-dated by several years the date of his first communication from Lenin. What use does Deutscher make of this matter crucial to any biography of Stalin? Although he used both Trotsky and Souvarine where they serve his thesis, this point he ignores.

2. Stalin's early life was spent in the Georgian revolutionary movement, an overwhelmingly Menshevik movement in which the Bolsheviks and even the Social Revolutionaries were always an obscure and insignificant minority. Deutscher makes no use of the richer Menshevik source material, or even of the earlier and sounder historical writings of the Bolsheviks of Georgia, written when men's memories of events were too fresh and general for wholesale fabrication. He ignores all the writings of the principal Georgian Bolshevik historian, Philip Makharadze, published in a steady stream from 1920 to 1929, in favor of the already patently doctored and "coordinated" joint work of Makharadze and Khachapuridze of 1932, when the construction of the Stalin legend was already far advanced. Not only are Zhordania, Ramishvili, and other leaders of the Georgian Social Democratic Republic quite literally "framed up" in Deutscher's pages on the basis of purely one-sided Bolshevik testimony, but so are most of

Stalin's own Georgian Bolshevik associates.

3. There is equal or greater obtuseness displayed concerning Bolshevism's opponents on an all-Russian scale. While Kerensky represented the February Revolution and was the head of a democratic government which Lenin himself characterized as "the freest in the world," Deutscher describes him in the single epithet, "the counter-revolution." The Social Revolutionaries are pictured as "irretrievably discrediting themselves in the eyes of the working class in September, 1917," though, in free elections for the Constituent Assembly held under Lenin's government, they got an absolute majority of the total vote cast, over 20,000,000 to the Bolshevik 9,000,000.

The positive contribution of Deutscher's book lies in a close and careful reading of the first eight volumes of Stalin's *Collected Works*, and the selection of many truly significant quotations from a dreary mass of second-rate political journalism. Indeed, it is a testimonial to the care with which Deutscher has read these volumes that his selections are frequently better than his interpretation. Thus Deutscher is at great pains to picture Stalin as a vacillating person swung this way and that by changing circumstance and improvising afresh to meet fresh emergencies that are forced upon him; but actually, the ably selected quotations show him as having a long-range determination to reach each of his major objectives, and shifting only in the degree to which he reveals that determination and the means he employs. To take only one example, the author's actual quotations show that Stalin first conceived of the outlines of the

Second World War in 1925 (Jan. 17), and then predicted that Russia's armies would be used to further revolution in other countries and that Russia would "have to enter but we ought to be the last to step out, and we should step out in order to throw the decisive weight in the scales, that should tilt the scales." By the autumn of the same year, Stalin has already predicted that it would be a war on Germany's part to recover "the corridor and Dantzig," and on Russia's to gain "Galicia and Western Volhynia . . . and Vilna." Other quotations show Stalin reoffering the alliance a year after Hitler came to power, and, though Deutscher does not use this, still expressing his admiration for Hitler in an argument with Churchill and Roosevelt at Teheran at the end of 1943 (*The Hopkins Papers*, p. 782).

Deutscher's book has been rather widely hailed as "objective." The impression of objectivity which the work is likely to make upon the not particularly informed reader is due to the fact that Deutscher continually rejects many of the methods employed by Stalin, as unduly ruthless, cruel and bloody, although he justifies beyond a peradventure all of Stalin's major historical actions. Stalin's ruthlessness is explained by the fact that he is a "Russian" and an "Asiatic" and an inheritor of the traditions of the Tsars. "The nation over which Stalin took power," writes Deutscher, "might rightly be called a nation of savages."

He is no kinder to other peoples who have had the misfortune to stand in the way of Stalin's expanding empire. The Baltic peoples are described as pro-Hitler, the German Social Democrats as "hoping to

find a *modus vivendi* with Hitler;" while Poland "fawned on Hitler." The purges in Eastern Europe, which, when Deutscher wrote, included the Petkovs, Manius, Nagys, and since have extended to the Rajks and Kostovs, are summed up as a necessary work of historical cleansing directed "against the old ruling classes" and the total states there introduced are pictured as "fulfilling, perhaps imperfectly, a dream of many generations of peasants and intellectuals . . . and opening broad vistas of common reform and advancement."

Part of the appearance of "objectivity" is due to the fact that Deutscher now borrows freely from, and now reasonably rejects, some criticism that Trotsky has made of Stalin. This is fine as far as it goes, but the orbit from which all of Deutscher's chief critical ideas is borrowed, the orbit Lenin-Trotsky-Stalin, is too narrow to permit of objectivity wherever Bolshevism itself is in question. Moreover, after Trotsky's death and the end of the latter's steady flow of anti-Stalinist writings, Deutscher is left without his main source of critical ideas. His zeal for apologetics enlarges, while his critical faculties atrophy. Therefore his major thesis emerges most clearly in the last third of the book, namely that "Stalin belongs to the great breed of revolutionary despots to which Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon belonged . . . he has put into practice a fundamentally new principle of social organization, which is certain to survive . . . to outlast Stalin himself as the better part of the work of Cromwell and Napoleon have outlasted them." It occurs to Deutscher, only to reject it, that the new principle may be the Total State. And it does not

occur to him at all to ask whether Stalin's régime, which he compares to both that of Robespierre and that of Napoleon, might not also be compared to that of the *Directoire*.

In sum, this book is useful to one who cannot read Stalin's works in the original, or does not care to wade through them and make significant selections. But to one who would understand Stalin the man or the Stalinist régime, it is still better to take and read together Souvarine's *Stalin and Stalin, A Political Biography*, by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.

And one curious detail: Deutscher is a Pole, yet, to justify Stalin's share in the partition of Poland, he is the only modern writer I know who has ventured also to justify the partition of Poland in the time of Catherine and Frederick!

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

*The Hoover Library*  
Stanford, California

KELSEN, HANS. *The Political Theory of Bolshevism. A Critical Analysis*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1948. 60 pp. \$1.00.

Hans Kelsen, formerly University professor in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, now in California, is one of the foremost jurists of the twentieth century. He has originated his own theory of law and called into being a whole school of jurists, mainly in Europe. He is not only a theorist of law but has actually created law in practice—inasmuch as he was the principal author of the "Federal Constitution of the Republic of Austria" of 1920. If this constitution failed to stand

the test of time, this was due not to any inner defects but to general causes.

Whatever Hans Kelsen writes, is of compelling interest and his comments on controversial issues are of particular value. For the very reason, maybe, that Kelsen is by nature incapable of treating science as a vehicle of politics and of approaching research in a spirit of partisanship, his work has been furiously assailed by the followers of Stalin and Lenin, to whom loyalty to the party line is compulsory even in the fields of biology, physics, astronomy, and so much the more in the humanities.

It should be understood that Kelsen's writings are not meant for the rank-and-file reader. They can be hardly called "entertaining." But those with a deeper interest in the problem dealt with in the booklet under review will find much in it that is highly instructive. The author's reasoning is methodical and systematic in true German fashion, with the underlying assumption that Bolshevism indeed has a theory, or philosophy, of its own, and with the honest intention of finding the truth. Those acquainted with the articles signed "X" and "Historicus" in the "Foreign Affairs," will find in Kelsen's little work the theoretical basis for the opinions expressed in them.

The booklet is divided into two parts. In the first, the author shows how the Anarchism which originally characterized the system of Bolshevism, in the course of time and in complete contradiction to Lenin's teachings, was transformed into a form of super-statism and totalitarianism. The second part demonstrates the incompatibility of

democracy with the dictatorship of a party.

Kelsen emphatically denies the alleged existence of two kinds of democracy—political and economic. "Formal" democracy is identical with democracy, since democracy is by its very nature a form of government." Among the essential freedoms which distinguish democracy, according to Kelsen, the freedom of political parties, "is the most important one."

Kelsen is opposed to statism, and most strongly to the state praised by Hegel as a god. What for Hegel represented the "justification of God in history," became for Marx the justification of the historical process as identical with immanent progress. And Marx cursed the state as the devil.

Hegel condemned Rousseau's doctrine because it represented the authority of the state as based upon a contract, that is upon the consent of individuals. This tends "to destroy the absolute Divine and its absolute authority and majesty," and thus it leads to revolution. The Hegelian-Marxists, on the contrary, believe that history requires them to make revolution in order to destroy the state. To this conception, as well as to the dialectical method, Stalin has remained faithful to this day. He still holds that "the transition to socialism and the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism, cannot be effected by slow changes, by reforms, but only . . . by revolution."

The Soviet state has ceased to be a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it is still a dictatorship of the party and it is still a state. Kelsen goes farther—he maintains that even should all states turn "socialist" after the Soviet model, the state



as such would by no means "wither away," nor would the rivalry and the conflicts between them come to an end. Kelsen's prediction has been empirically confirmed by the breach between Moscow and Belgrade.

With numerous quotations from Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Radek, Kelsen convincingly proves that the "founding fathers" of the Soviet régime were far from pretending that their state was democratic. On the contrary, they denounced and vilified democracy, asserting that it is always the product of capitalism and stands for domination by capital,—while "the Soviet government is no democracy, it is the form of the government of the workers." (45) True, Lenin sometimes voices the conflicting opinion that "democracy is nothing to them" (to the capitalists—the "slave-owners"). But whenever Lenin seems to support democracy, he has in mind not the democratic form of government but democracy as the historic basis and prerequisite of socialism.

Dictatorship in Russia has been from the first the dictatorship of a single party,—and for that reason Bolshevik Russia belongs in the same category as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The totalitarian Soviet state is ruled not only by a minority of the nation, but by a minority—"the vanguard"—of that very class in whose name this rule is ostensibly exercised. Moreover, within the party itself, it is again only a minority—the "leaders," the "party machine,"—which dictates its will to the rest. "The Provisional government which was overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution was certainly not guilty of any attempt to suppress politically the proletariat," writes Kelsen, and he goes

on: "This may explain why Lenin places such extraordinary stress on the thesis that the only way to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat is by violent revolution."

The Soviet Constitution of 1936 is nothing but "a splendid democratic façade behind which a relatively small group of men exercise unrestricted control over one of the greatest nations of the world." Despite all Stalin's protestations that "there are no longer any antagonistic classes in (Soviet) society," the government is well aware that there are plenty of grounds for the formation of a number of political parties, among them parties hostile to the régime. For that very reason the Stalin constitution, while proclaiming various freedoms, fails to grant freedom of formation and activity of political parties and "preserves unchanged the present leading position of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.," as attested by Stalin himself.

Kelsen concludes his analysis with the following words: "It is strange that the Bolshevik theory as the ideology of a true revolutionary movement which openly admits its intention of destroying by violence all values, the sham values, of the past in order to build up a new and better world, that this doctrine as presented by its most outstanding authority in open contradiction to the facts, and at the price of highly problematic distortions, pretends to spare just one value of a doomed civilization: the ideal of democracy. This *sacrificium intellectus* may be explained by the fact that even the most revolutionary philosophy of life cannot ignore man's indestructible desire for freedom, which, if it

cannot be satisfied by deeds, must be satisfied at least by words."

MARK VISHNIAK

*New York City*

ROY, M. N. *The Russian Revolution*. Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, India. 1949. 631 pp. Rs. 18.

The author of this book is an Indian who once belonged to the inner circles of the Communist International, headed the Moscow Oriental University, and guided the Communist movements in Asia in the twenties. The book is neither a history nor a systematic account of the Russian revolution, but a series of essays, written between 1937-1948, representing the author's reactions to international events of the last two decades. These events, the author believes, were largely the outcome of the world-wide impact of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution—hence the title.

Mr. Roy withdrew from the Comintern in the late '20s because of disagreements in strategy. In subsequent years he continued to play an active part in Indian politics of the Left, but gradually came to doubt more and more the wisdom of Soviet policies on the international scene. Eventually he seemingly repudiated the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism which motivated his earlier activities. To a large extent the main interest of this book is in the record of the author's disillusionment in the methods and leadership of International Communism. As such, this volume is an interesting addition to the growing literature of disillusioned ex-Communist leaders.

Until the end of World War II,

Mr. Roy still considered himself a Marxist and believed that the Soviet Union "was doing a liberating mission by building Socialism in one-sixth of the globe." It is in this light that he interpreted international events even after the Soviet-Nazi pact. It would appear that his faith was beginning to waver only after the post-war Soviet foreign policy began to take shape. The emerging pattern of this policy in Europe and Asia convinced the author (around 1947) "that the Soviet Union was no longer acting as a socialist state and that its foreign policy was a reflection of that international movement away from democracy, not toward socialism through proletarian dictatorship, but towards neo-nationalism."

Has Stalin, then, "betrayed" the revolution? No, there was no "betrayal," Mr. Roy believes, but a "miscarriage," due, it appears, to the fallacies of the original Marxist doctrine, its dogmatism, the Utopian nature of its ideal, Leninist opportunism and his glorification of power. Stalin has made several blunders, however. His first mistake was that he failed to carry the banner of revolution to Europe by attacking Hitler first instead of waiting to be attacked by him. His second mistake was the promotion of nationalism which in the end, Mr. Roy observes, has turned out to be a "veritable Frankenstein." When the Red Army moved into Europe at the end of the war, Mr. Roy deplored the fact that Stalin failed to carry the message of International Communism and that Soviet post-war policy served merely to strengthen the power and structure of Russian national state. This degeneration of Communism into Nationalism is, in his opinion, actually

promoting a revival of Fascism and is a threat to world peace.

There seems to be a fundamental contradiction in Mr. Roy's position. Having repudiated the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism as fallacious and morally unsound, how can the author simultaneously deplore Stalin's failure to carry Communism into Europe? Moreover, are not the régimes now established in Eastern Europe and China proofs of the success of Stalin's "red Napoleonism?" Mr. Roy must also surely realize that the revival of patriotism during the war helped to unite the nation and so to win the war; no sooner was the war terminated when the new party line checked the trend toward nationalism and reemphasized the basic precepts of Marxism-Leninism.

The chief trouble with Mr. Roy's book is that his point of view was constantly changing while he was writing it. There are contradictions from chapter to chapter; one is never clear from what standpoint he analyses a given situation or historical event. It is, certainly, confusing to read in one chapter that American post-war policy would restore the capitalist status quo, and should be opposed, and in another that the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan offered the best guarantee against World War III. At times, Mr. Roy seems inexplicably naive. In the chapter "The Future of Europe," for example, he seems to think that Anglo-Soviet cooperation is a real cornerstone for future democratic reconstruction of Europe; later, he is puzzled by the lack of cordiality between Stalin and the British Labor government. It seems strange for a former Leninist to be puzzled by the inherent

hostility of Soviet Communism towards British Socialism!

From a historical point of view the most interesting parts of the book are perhaps Mr. Roy's personal recollections of Lenin and Trotsky and the early activities of the Comintern. Though he personally disliked Trotsky and disagreed with his doctrine of Permanent Revolution, he admired him as an outstanding leader, a great orator, agitator, and a brilliant writer. At the end of 1927, Mr. Roy was present at the historic session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern when Trotsky was removed from its membership. At this meeting Trotsky defended his thesis that so long as the world remained capitalist, Soviet economy was bound to revert to capitalism. In his speech of rebuttal, Mr. Roy pointed out that there were only two alternatives before the Comintern leaders: one was to adopt Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country," the other to accept defeat, lay down power, and go into emigration. "Trotsky looked crestfallen. All through the night, he had heckled every speaker with challenging questions. He kept quiet while I spoke, and hung his head in answer to my question. The historic vote was cast against him—unanimously. . . ." "Had Trotsky had his way," Mr. Roy concludes, "and Stalin been removed from the leadership of the party, most probably there would be no Soviet Republic today."

Interesting are Mr. Roy's observations on the functioning of the Comintern. In general, they confirm the view of the abject subservience of the national Communist parties to the Kremlin leadership, "the spirit of hero-worship and the

atmosphere of the Catholic church, which came to prevail in the Communist International, caused intellectual atrophy and political helplessness on the part of the Communist parties outside the Soviet Union. . . . Unquestioning acceptance of whatever the Russians said came to be the criterion of Communist loyalty." The fundamental weakness of the Comintern, according to Mr. Roy, was that the leaders of the affiliated parties believed that the revolution everywhere must follow the Russian pattern, "that the scenes of Leningrad and Moscow in 1917 should be re-enacted to the minutest detail, including the very stage setting in Berlin, Paris, and London." He gives an interesting description of how the pioneers of the Comintern were purged in the late '20s and replaced "by youthful enthusiasts or sycophants." As far as India is concerned, the author believes that the Comintern was an unmitigated evil, that "its Indian section had done more harm to the cause of the Indian revolution than any single factor."

Since the end of World War II, Mr. Roy has bitterly opposed the Soviet policy of supporting colonial nationalism indiscriminately. The basis for his position is his fear that the former colonies may become independent national-capitalist states and would be likely to gravitate towards Fascism.

In the present East-West conflict, Mr. Roy seems to stand with Western democracies. "American help and protection, whatever may be their ultimate motive, do not in the least curtail the rights and liberties of the beneficiaries, while the alternatives offered by the Russians through the intermediaries of the various Communist parties

means destruction of all that and more."

DIMITRI VON MOHRENSCHILDT  
*Dartmouth College*

LYASHCHENKO, PETER I. *History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution*. Translated by L. M. Herman. New York, Macmillan 1949. 880 pp. \$13.00.

This is another welcome addition to the list of Russian books which are being made available in English through the Russian Translation Project of the American Council of Learned Societies. The titles for translation have been chosen by an Administrative Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. John A. Morrison, and the translations are financed by a Rockefeller grant. Dr. W. Chapin Huntington is the editor of the series. This volume was edited by Professor Ellsworth L. Raymond. Dean Calvin B. Hoover wrote the Introduction, and Mr. Leonard H. Dykes supervised the re-drawing of the maps. Presumably the major share of the credit and responsibility fall upon Messrs. Raymond and Herman.

A new Russian edition of this book was brought out in 1947-8. Mr. Herman describes the new edition as "a routine revision" with some additional material and some re-arrangement of the old material. I may add that the inclusion of new material and the re-arrangement of the old have so altered the pagination that it is tediously difficult to compare the present translation (which is of the 1939 edition) with the 1947-8 edition. The 1939 edition was published by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of



Science of the USSR and was designated for use in "schools of economics." The 1947-8 edition is approved by the Ministry of Higher Education for general use in institutions of higher learning. Lyashchenko's *History* may therefore be taken as consonant with the party line at least up to 1948.

This is somewhat remarkable in that Peter Ivanovich Lyashchenko can hardly be considered as a representative of "the new Soviet man." Lyashchenko was born in the reign of Alexander II, had his preliminary schooling in the reign of Alexander III, and reached his personal and academic maturity in the reign of Nicholas II. Before the Revolution, Lyashchenko published three major studies in agricultural economy, taught for a time at the University of St. Petersburg and later was Professor of Political Economy and Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Toms. After 1917 he served as professor at the First Moscow State University and at the Institute of National Economy. Dean Hoover surmises that Professor Lyashchenko survived the Revolution because he was a legal Marxist. The fact that he successfully continued his academic career under the new régime is *prima facie* evidence that he was able to jump from legal Marxism to Leninism and to Stalinism. His *History* follows exactly the line laid down by the Party. Within the limits and distortions thus dictated, it is a competent and useful study. It is not, of course, an objective study.

The chronological range of the book is from the prehistoric period to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Part I (about 400 pages) carries the story to 1870; Part II (about 380 pages), from 1870 to

1917. The subdivisions within each part are as follows: Chaps. I—III, to the ninth century A.D.; IV—VIII, ninth to the fourteenth centuries; IX—XIV, fifteenth to the seventeenth; XV—XXI, 1700 to 1866; XXII—XXVI ("Industrial Capitalism"), 1870 to 1900; XXVII—XXX, minority and colonial policies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; XXXI—XXXVII, 1900 to 1917. Each subdivision is introduced by a general treatment which is followed by detailed consideration of selected aspects. There is an excellent bibliography of Russian materials, a useful "Chronological Index," a fair number of tables, and twenty-one maps. Footnotes are grouped at the end of each chapter.

The publisher's statement that this is "The first work in any language that covers the economic history of Russia from earliest times down to the Revolution of 1917 . . ." may be technically correct but it does considerably less than justice to Mavor's monumental and encyclopedic work. Of course there is much in Lyashchenko (including the Party line) which is not found in Mavor. The latter did not always use the best sources and, obviously, more recent research has added items which Mavor could not have known. The most important addition which Lyashchenko makes is the material dealing with the very early period and with the "national minority borderlands"—a label which covers Ukraine, Bielorussia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Siberia. The book would be worth having if there were nothing else in it. And there is much else in it—all approached and presented from a predetermined point of view. The book abounds in



*ipse dixit* which the two following quotations exemplify.

... the problem of the existence of feudal relations in Russian history is definitely solved. Pioneer work in this field was done by Lenin, who ... not only traced clearly the historical origins of feudal relations ... as far back as the Rus of Kiev ... but also contributed a cogent theory on the feudal-serf economic system. (p. 89)

After the death of Yaroslav (1054), "the conquering tendencies disappear and the decline of Gothic Russia commences", in the words of Marx. ... (p. 97)

The construction of that last sentence illustrates one of the major faults of Mr. Herman's translation and of Mr. Raymond's editing. Awkward sentences and too literal translations (e.g., "The Crimea was held by the Tatars since 1239, when ... p. 348) are distressingly frequent. Or take another example (p. 313) "In 1797 a general standard for *barshchina* work was fixed. ... But even earlier, mostly, however, by the nineteenth century ... [the landowners were no longer content with this limit]." This does not adequately convey the intended meaning.

Nor do either the editor or the translator solve the problem of foreign words. Perhaps it isn't a soluble problem and certainly no solution will satisfy everyone. I have no quarrel with using such terms as *obrok*, *barshchina*, *dessyatina* which not only appear repeatedly but are much simpler than their English counterparts. (Although land areas could be given in acres thus cutting out the use of the Russian word altogether. And, incidentally, one *dessyatina* equals

2.7 acres, not one acre as Mr. Raymond has it on p. 67.) But there is less excuse for using transliterated Russian in the case of terms which appear infrequently or which are peripheral to the main theme. Why write "*auls* (Caucasian villages)," for example? Why not simply write Caucasian villages and let it go at that? After all, this is supposed to be a translation, not a language exercise. Besides, the meanings supplied for the Russian words are not always clear. Several meanings are stated or implied for *kholop* on pp. 108-9. Or take this example (p. 100), *Podsechnoye*—"A type of migratory tillage moving from one clearing to another.—Ed." Now "tillage" means "the operation of tilling land." So what the editor has written is: A type of migratory operation of tilling land moving etc. On page 142 this appears: "The *podsechnaya* system of agriculture: a selective method of agriculture in which arable land is obtained by cutting down the forest on it and, later on, when the soil has been exhausted, is again afforested." What "is again afforested"? What distinguishes *podsechnoye* from *podsechnaya* as far as the essential meaning is concerned? And why not say it in English in the first place? It would be most ungracious to cavil at such items if they were not, unfortunately, typical of the whole book.

There is one other adverse criticism which needs to be made even at the risk of appearing ungrateful to the A.C.L.S. and to this very worthwhile and helpful project. The prices of the books—or at least of several of them—are prohibitively high. This book of Lyashchenko's retails for \$13.00; Gudzy's and Balzak's for \$10.00 each; and Vy-

shinsky's for \$15.00. Forty-eight dollars for four books! Students certainly cannot pay such prices and many teachers find it hard (if not impossible) to do so. And with library budgets being steadily reduced in many places, librarians will hesitate to spend so much for books of limited usefulness to their clientele. There is danger that the prices will partially defeat the purpose of the whole project which would be a very great pity.

WARREN B. WALSH

*Syracuse University*

SCHWARTZ, HARRY. *The Soviet Economy: A Selected Bibliography of Materials in English*. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press. 1949. 85 pp. Cloth, \$2.25; paper, \$1.75.

From the accumulated mass of material in English, good, bad, or indifferent, Professor Schwartz has selected books, articles, and pamphlets which will provide a substantial introduction to any aspect of the Soviet economy. Each entry is briefly described, and where bias in one direction or another is clearly present, the description notes it. The growing body of students in this field will be grateful to the author for eliminating the untold hours of search which would be necessary to collect these references independently.

The relative paucity of English materials on the Soviet Union reflects both the gradually increasing secretiveness of the Russians, and the absence of widespread interest on our part until recent years. Few have been willing to acquire a reading knowledge of Russian, an obvious prerequisite for careful study.

While it is now much easier for a college student to study the language, an effective barrier still restricts the bulk of the curious to English sources. Here the chief difficulty is to distill a residue of reliable conclusions from the more or less worthless tracts of friend and foe. Only recently has the output of analytic research of a high order come to be numbered in more than a handful of items each year. The bibliography under review contains all the major scholarly contributions from 1917 to date, together with a judicious selection of rewarding popular presentations. Readers who work through the references here collected on any given topic will recognize both the possibility of doing objective research in this field, and the challenging gaps to be filled.

The entries are arranged in order of publication under each of sixteen major topic headings. If the coverage in the field with which this reviewer is familiar provides an accurate index, Professor Schwartz and his staff have included all items of importance. Many, if not most, of the noteworthy contributions of the past three decades have been journal articles; a wide net was thrown for them in preparing this bibliography, which is consequently far more useful than Grierson's 1942 compilation (restricted to books and pamphlets, and mainly to those published in England). There may well be a few important items which have been missed, but if the reason were their appearance in periodicals not canvassed by Professor Schwartz, it could be argued that they are not likely to be available to users of his bibliography. As it is, many of the references are to serials

which will be absent from most library collections.

As the author points out in his preface, sound research on the U.S.S.R. requires use of primary materials in Russian. The present work, nevertheless, will put the scholar in touch with research already done, and with translations or analyses of Russian sources to which he may not have access. It also refers him to the English writings of foreign travelers in the U.S.S.R., when valuable or neutral observations can thus be obtained.

It is to be hoped that this bibliography will soon be rendered obsolete, in the sense that comprehensive analyses of the major aspects of the Soviet economy will supersede the pioneer efforts of earlier years. In the meantime, the volume under review will serve as a valuable guide to our existing stock of knowledge.

HOLLAND HUNTER

Haverford College

SPECTOR, IVAR. *An Introduction to Russian History and Culture*. New York, Van Nostrand. 1949. 454 pp. \$4.50.

Dr. Spector introduces his book with the modest statement that he has written a Russian history for American undergraduates. He has not only admirably achieved this goal, but beyond that has written a clear, lucid and well organized account of Russia's development from the ninth century to the present, which anyone interested in a survey of Russian history should find stimulating and enjoyable reading. A brief introductory chapter discusses geography and population of the U.S.S.R., with descriptive

data on the constituent republics. The main body of the book is arranged in two parts of unequal length. The first, covering two thirds of the volume, deals with Russia from 1862 to 1917 and the second discusses the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1949.

"The Rurik Dynasty" and "the Romanov Dynasty" are the two headings under which the development of pre-revolutionary Russia is presented. This is not to say, however, that political trends and factors dominate the scene in Dr. Spector's analysis. Russia's social problems and cultural achievements play a prominent part in the narrative. It is perhaps regrettable, that comparatively little space—only fifty pages—has been devoted to Russia under the House of Rurik, while over two hundred pages deal with Russia under the Romanov dynasty. It is probably due to this uneven distribution of space that several major omissions occur in the earlier part of the book. Ivan IV's *Oprichnina* is referred to solely as a police force. The equally important application of the term to a territorial nucleus contrasted with *Zemshchina* is not mentioned. The subsequent statement that from the *Oprichnina* there gradually developed a new landowning gentry class further confuses the issue, since the gentry class of *dvoriane* began to emerge long before the time of Ivan IV, and it was chiefly from their ranks that members of the *Oprichnina* were recruited. A further omission occurs in the discussion of the Time of Troubles. Here, no mention is made of the reign of Vassily Shuisky, significant as the last attempt of the boyar class to regain power.

In the much more detailed ac-

count of Russia under the Romanov dynasty, a separate chapter is devoted to the cultural achievements in the nineteenth century, particularly in literature and music. This is the finest chapter in the book, although here, too, a few shortcomings need to be pointed out. One is that Pushkin's creative achievement has been dealt with too summarily. It seems rather out of proportion to devote only one page to Pushkin while three deal with Goncharov's *Oblomov* alone. Another point of criticism concerns the interpretation of Dostoevsky's works. This may be a matter of opinion, but it seems that the rôle of Slavophilism in Dostoevsky's writing is vastly overstressed. To call the clash between Slavophiles and Westerners the central theme in Dostoevsky's novels, to say, for instance, that the main issue in *Crime and Punishment* is political, is a dangerous oversimplification of Dostoevsky's complex analysis of the psychological tragedy and dilemma of Modern Man.

The development of the Soviet Union is discussed with admirable objectivity and impartiality. A separate chapter, brief and descriptive rather than interpretative, deals with Soviet literature and music.

The book contains a number of helpful maps, a useful chronological table of Russia's rulers, and numerous excellent illustrations.

V. TSCHEBOTARIOFF-BILL  
Princeton University

VON ECKARDT, HANS. *Ivan the Terrible*. Translated from the German by Catherine Alison Phillips. N. Y., Knopf, 1949. 421 pp. \$5.00.

Not one of the biographies of

Ivan the Terrible written during the past twenty years in France, America, Germany, or Russia is satisfactory. They have in common a lack of independent scholarship. They show little attempt to investigate facts before drawing conclusions. They all use a vague psychological approach, are affected by nationalistic feelings, and lead to contemporary rather than historical interpretations.

Von Eckhardt's biography, now available in translation, though interesting in parts, is no exception. Its merits are reduced by an incompetent translation, which fails in making intelligible the thoughts expressed in the original. We are swamped with meaningless words and exposed to grammatical misconstructions. The constant use of "this," "these," "it" without antecedents, of "now" without connection and to the utter confusion of the time element, is matched by construction such as "Russian spiritual life felt the effects of this even on the most profound of the motive forces by which it was stirred" (p. 18), "the nature of the adversary against whom they were ranged was in itself unfortunate; for the opposition to Poland was not felt to be vital" (p. 152), "the moment . . . seemed to offer him a chance for which he had long awaited" (p. 153). Through the fog of the translator's verbiage we are expected to perceive three aspects: Ivan's personality, his plans and achievements in building Russia as a nation, and his external policies.

Inasmuch as the author states that Ivan IV was not "credible" (p. 239), we cannot expect much from his presentation of Ivan as a human being. The psychological



rather than historical treatment might have been more effective if the author had had in mind Faust's words "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust," and had let facts speak for themselves. Instead, events and actions are selected in order to serve impressionistic descriptions, and questionable parallels are drawn between Ivan and such figures as Machiavelli, Philip II of Spain, and Henry IV of France. The influences of sixteenth-century Europe are exaggerated, while the Russian tradition is underestimated. Yet tradition combined with qualities inherent in human nature everywhere would have served better to convey an understanding of Ivan's strange nature. No wonder, the author arrives at the conclusion that the Tsar "made the state an expression of his own inner nature," and that "this phenomenon is almost incomprehensible; yet it was grasped instinctively by the mass of the people" (p. 28). Incomprehensible, indeed; and unbelievable that the mass of the Russian people as it existed in the sixteenth century should have instinctively grasped Ivan's policies!

Aside from generalization, von Eckardt gives a good picture of Ivan's youth and interprets interestingly the religious motives which prompted the Tsar in many of his actions. The spiritual climate which induced Ivan to make his many pilgrimages and which, after the death of Anastasia, led to the overthrow of the boyars as well as of the "Chosen Council" are well described. Typical traits are ably brought out and in many instances become meaningful for many historical personalities besides Ivan's.

Less satisfactory than the description of Ivan's first thirty years

is that of his later life. It seems that von Eckardt accepts unquestioningly the truth of Ivan's own testimony according to which Anastasia's death caused him to become a different human being. Yet other factors, though less flattering, can explain the change. "Success," von Eckardt justly points out (p. 107), "did him no good," even though historical proof may be needed for the assertion that Ivan's advisors Adashev, Sylvester, and also Kurbsky were conscious of his weakness and therefore dissuaded the Tsar from enterprises such as the Livonian war. Likewise, later comments—fitting, incidentally, Peter the Great better than Ivan—ask for substantiation, namely that after Anastasia's death "the majesty of the Tsar deliberately degraded itself" and that Ivan "abandoned tragedy for a blasphemous, burlesque comedy style" (p. 196). It is only toward the end of the book, with the negotiations and conclusion of the peace of Yam Zapolie and the last years of the Tsar that we again recognize the dominating figure of Ivan and can once more reconcile it with historical facts.

With regard to the building of the Russian nation and the internal policies of Ivan, the author is on safer ground. He gives an adequate picture of Ivan's early undertakings, the coexistence of old and new ideas and institutions, and of old and new men; he is particularly successful in connecting every event with the religious atmosphere of the time. He ponders the fact that the church in supporting autocracy was yet aware that "all power comes from evil," and that "perhaps it is not the power of the sovereign that is willed by God but only the [sav-



ing] humility of those who are subject to him" (p. 122)—indicating thereby the difference between absolutism in Europe and autocracy in Russia. Likewise, von Eckardt describes well the *Oprichnina* which, he states, was based on arbitrariness instead of a new law, yet in turn produced new legal concepts. To be sure, the author is only too often carried away by modern ways of thinking, as when he insists (p. 72) that Ivan was looking among his advisors for "progressive" minds or that the Chosen Council "rejected . . . despotism" (p. 156); on the whole, however, he demonstrates insight and arrives at the justifiable conclusion that also after Adashev's and Sylvester's elimination great constructive work was achieved by Ivan.

The least satisfactory part of von Eckardt's work concerns the foreign policies of Ivan the Terrible. Lack of research becomes here most obvious. When speaking of the destruction of Novgorod, the author correctly points out that Novgorod did not fit into a centralized state, and he makes valuable observations on "the road from activity to humility . . . from pride to contrition, from sin to repentance" (p. 308); but the foreign entanglements leading to the fall of the town and the events themselves remain obscure. The treatment of Poland is not in proportion to the importance of Russian-Polish relationships; Kurbsky's rôle is exaggerated and statements such as "Kurbsky won over European opinion to his side" (p. 330) are misleading. The expedition into Siberia is hardly mentioned, notwithstanding its tremendous importance; Denmark and the great treaty of 1562 are ignored; Sweden is only indirectly referred

to, and what is said about King Erik XIV needs thorough reconsideration. The contact with England is emphasized, but the untenable statement that "Archangel made up for the loss of Narva for generations to come" suffices as an example to indicate that the conclusions arrived at are often incorrect. As against hundreds of ships bound for Narva as long as the town was in Russian hands, there were for years to come no more than two to six which risked the navigation to Archangel, and often none got through.

The conquest of Kazan is well described; that of Astrakhan, on the other hand, is limited to about one sentence. The weakest part, however, is the account dealing with the Livonian war, Ivan's major effort during the twenty-five most important years of his reign. The bare statement that this war must be interpreted as an attempted settlement between divergent intellectual forces does not compensate for the author's failure to describe the economic and strategic factors leading to the war, its causes, aims, and events, and its influence on the attitude and actions of Ivan. Details are often inaccurate; never were "the majority of the Livonians dragged off to primitive Russian villages" (p. 341) nor did the country populations—Letts, Esths, Finns—side against Moscow "with one accord" (p. 342); up to 1575, the opposite was true. Owing to such omissions and misinterpretations, a key for an understanding of Ivan's Livonian policies is not provided.

There are many other errors of detail, e.g. regarding the reign of Charles IX of France (p. 371), the dates for the introduction of primo-

geniture, the removal of the Metropolitan see to Moscow (p. 250), Godunov's accession (p. 396), the establishment of the Patriarchate at Moscow (p. 57), etc. As a result, we come to the conclusion that von Eckardt has written a psychological study rather than a history with verifiable facts. He has endowed his study with interesting general observations and has often

succeeded in recreating the atmosphere in which Ivan's actions took place. But he has failed to make the person alive and the story plausible; he gives nothing new, some things that are wrong, and hardly anything is exhaustively treated. We still need an adequate biography of Ivan the Terrible.

WALTHER KIRCHNER  
*University of Delaware*

# RUSSIAN IMPACT ON ART

By Mikhail Alpatov

**M**ORE THAN 1,000 years of Russian painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music and drama are covered in this volume, set forth in comparison to those arts in other countries throughout the entire period.

During the past 25 years Mikhail Alpatov has written numerous works of wide acclaim on the development of Byzantine and Russian art, on the Kakhrie Diame frescoes of Constantinople, on Asiatic icons and miniatures, on Raphael, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, and Titian, etc. In addition, he has been lecturing actively at Moscow University, the Academy of Architecture, Higher Art and Technical Studios, Institute of Fine Arts and elsewhere.

This book, edited and with a preface by Martin L. Wolf, represents a comprehensive summary of Alpatov's lifelong work, and its scope indicates that he set and reached a goal never before undertaken in the sphere of the subject. Yet, its lively and graphic style renders it accessible to the general reader as well as to the specialist.

Includes a glossary, bibliography and index.

*Illustrated.* \$7.50

*At your bookstore, or order direct:*

**PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY, Publishers**

15 E. 40th St., Dept. 213, New York 16, N. Y.

*(Expedite shipment by enclosing remittance.)*

## MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT

Sixth Session

June 30 - August 17, 1950

*Director:* DR. MISCHA H. FAYER, Middlebury College

Courses leading to the M.A. and D.M.L. degrees in Russian

Faculty of native teachers

Exclusive use of Russian both in and out of the classroom

Russian Dormitories with living and dining facilities

### EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAM

Lectures by faculty and guest speakers • Concert of Russian Music

Folk Dancing • Russian plays and movies • Outdoor activities

### LECTURE COURSES

Gorky: Voice of Protest and Faith—Dr.

Mischa H. Fayer

Development of Russian Drama—Profes-

sor Ludmilla Patrick, Slavic Depart-

ment, University of California, Berkeley

Russian Folklore—Professor Ludmilla Patrick

Methods of Teaching Russian—Dr. Nicholas Vakar, Wheaton College and Harvard University

Russian Civilization—Dr. Nicholas Vakar

Russian Short Story—Professor Tanya

Leshinsky, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

### LANGUAGE COURSES

Grammar and Composition courses—

Mrs. Pressman, Mrs. Solow, Dr. Vac-

quier (Nazareth College)

Conversation and Oral Expression—Mrs.

Solow, Miss Leshinsky, Professor

Kasem-Beg (Connecticut College),

Miss Borisova-Morosova (Simmons

College)

Practical and Advanced Phonetics—Mr.

Pressman

*For further information write:*

Office of the Summer Schools, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt.

Princeton

UNIVERSITY PRESS

*A surprising reminder  
of Cervantes' influence  
on Russian literature*

**CERVANTES  
IN RUSSIA**

*by Ludmilla Buketoff Turkevich*

A GREAT PART of the West's cultural impact upon the Russian mind has been the influence of Cervantes. This distinguished study by a lecturer in modern languages at Princeton describes Cervantes' general popularity among Russian readers, and his effect on such Russian writers as Pushkin, Turgenev, and Dostoyevsky. No. 8, *Princeton Publications in Modern Languages*.

\$4.00

*At your bookstore*

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS



*Authoritative, comprehensive books that help  
us understand the USSR . . .*

## NATURAL REGIONS of the USSR

By L. S. BERG

The dean of Soviet geographers, one of Russia's greatest experts in the field, provides a comprehensive description of all the natural regions and zones of the vast U.S.S.R. This unique book is for the first time made available in English, and contains information found nowhere else. Its strength is based on Prof. Berg's intimate knowledge gained from field work in every part of the U.S.S.R. 23 maps, glossary, exhaustive index, many illustrations. Publ. in May. Probably \$10.00

## History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution

By PETER I. LYASHCHENKO

This monumental volume is the first work in any language to cover the economic history of Russia from earliest times down to the Revolution of 1917. A vast compendium of historical economic data—much of it original material. 21 rare and unusual maps. \$13.00

## The Maritime History of Russia

By MAIRIN MITCHELL

The first comprehensive work in English on Russia's maritime history, 848-1948. Reveals Russia's maritime aims, discusses geopolitics with reference to their application to the USSR, and the effect of the Atomic Age on ocean power, particularly that of the USSR. Maps and photographs. \$5.00

## Economic Geography of the USSR

Edited by S. S. BALZAK,  
V. F. VASYUTIN, Y. G. FEIGIN

Unavailable elsewhere in English, this is an exhaustive study of Soviet natural resources and industrial potential, compiled by Soviet scholars and technicians. Contains surprising information on the possibilities for Soviet development, and an exposition of Soviet economic theory. \$10.00

## American-Russian Relations in the Far East

By PAULINE TOMPKINS

This history of relations between Russia and America in the Far East, 1895-1948, tells the full story of the strategic, psychological, moral, and diplomatic jockeying between the two countries, and throws new light on the present situation. \$5.00

MACMILLAN